



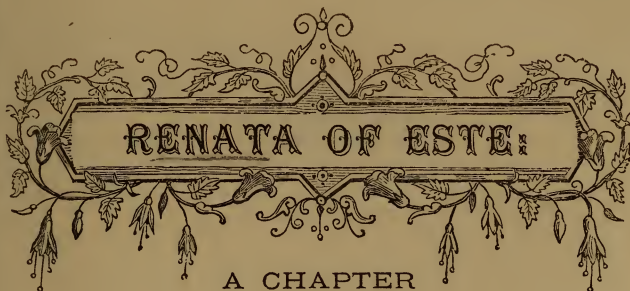








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FROM THE

History of the Reformation in France and Italy.

BY

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Pastor near Giessen, Germany.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,

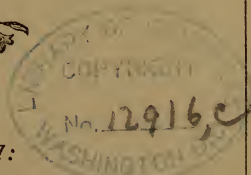
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RENATA OF ESTE.

I.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

"THE knowledge of all languages and of the richest treasures left us by the ancient world, I owe to my mother. Yet in science and real perception neither of her two daughters was ever equal to herself. And yet, if either one could be at all compared to her, certainly to Lucretia belonged that right."



THUS Leonora of Este expresses her opinion, in Goethe's "Torquato Tasso," concerning her mother; and that mother is the Christian woman whose biography we wish now to present to the reader. She was descended from a royal family, and the consciousness of the high position in

which she was placed by birth and circumstances never left her during her life. It is not, however, on account of any royal virtues that she possessed that she occupies a place in history, but because of those excellences of heart and mind which, possessed by women of any rank, make them worthy of imitation.

She was a Christian whose strength and faith were proved in the fire of tribulation, and on whose life not even her bitterest foes could cast the slightest censure.

Renata of Este was born on the 29th of October, 1510, in the Palace of Blois, which was situated in the north-western part of France. Her father was Louis XII, the justly celebrated King of France, who, before his ascent to the throne, was Duke of Orleans. As early as his twelfth year he was betrothed, on political grounds, and entirely against his will, to the Princess Joanne, daughter of Louis XI. It is reported that corporal punishment was inflicted upon him to force him to consent

to the alliance. How could it be expected that such a marriage could do any thing more than have an injurious effect upon his character? His heart is said to have been attracted to the wealthy and beautiful heiress of Brittany, Duchess Anne, who reciprocated his affections. Notwithstanding he saw the necessity of fulfilling his engagement with the Princess Joanne, the marriage, as may be supposed, was not a happy one. The most noticeable feature in Joanne's character was her gentleness and meekness; but she was destitute of all personal attractiveness, so that, in this respect, she won very few admirers, especially among the opposite sex.

The Duchess Anne of Brittany had also a marriage contract to fulfill against her will. She had been in every respect legally betrothed to the brave Emperor Maximilian; and this marriage was, as is frequently the case with princesses and princes, arranged by ambassadors. Maximilian was, just at that

time, busily engaged in Hungary protecting the boundaries of his country against the repeated attacks of the Turks, and was, therefore, prevented from visiting his affianced bride, or, more strictly, his wife.

Charles VIII, the French king, who also wished to marry Anne, was very desirous of breaking this engagement, and taking the place of Maximilian at Anne's side, so that he might thus unite the dukedom of Brittany with the French Crown. In order to accomplish his purpose, he led large forces of troops into Brittany, and, by cruelly desolating the country and besieging its capital, compelled the young duchess, out of sympathy for her subjects, to yield all opposition, and consent to his proposals. He died, however, in 1496, without an heir to the throne. His successor, who was his nearest relative, as we have before mentioned, was the Duke of Orleans, Louis XII, who now took possession of the French Crown. He had already passed the

excited and passionate period attending youth, and reached that time in life when self-control and discretion had gained the ascendancy. Immediately on the commencement of his reign the highest hopes were awakened for him on the part of his subjects.

After entering upon his new position, he was advised by one of his courtiers to retaliate the unkindnesses which had previously been dealt him by his enemies. He replied, "It is not becoming the *king* to inflict punishment for improprieties that have been committed against the *Duke of Orleans*." He immediately gave striking proof that he had the welfare of his subjects at heart. In all branches of his administration, and especially in awarding justice, he carried all the essential reforms into action. This principle was firm and unshaken in later life. He was kindly disposed to all, and possessed the wisdom of the true ruler. During his entire reign he pursued the same course, always ready to

observe order and right, and to contribute to the happiness of his subjects.

Very soon after he ascended the throne he was induced to perform an act which, from a Christian point of view, was certainly wrong. It was to separate from his present wife, Joanne, and be united with the widowed Queen Anne. Perhaps the old love was kindled anew in his heart, or, it may be, he feared that, if Anne were united to another, Brittany would be lost to France. It is believed generally, however, that he had both objects in view. Which was the greater, we are not prepared to say. Being separated from Joanne was a very trying ordeal for King Louis. It is well known that sometimes, in Rome, when the circumstances require it, more shrewdness is employed than unshaken adherence to fixed principles. We will give two of the king's principal reasons for the separation. One was, that he was too nearly related to Joanne, as her father had stood for him in baptism ; the

other was, that the marriage was not a real one, as it was enforced. In addition to factitious reasons, the Pope was more easily influenced by the circumstances that he regarded a friendly alliance with the King of France as highly advantageous to himself.

The separation was determined upon on the seventeenth of December, 1498, and as soon as the following month, January, King Louis and Anne were formally united in marriage. They now went to reside in the palace of Blois, where they spent many happy days. Louis had this home of his ancestors restored at great expense. By the aid of the best Italian artists, he had it arranged in the latest and most magnificent style. The new piazzas were decorated with arabesques. The many escutcheons combined the lilies of France with the ermine of Brittany.

The king's engagements in the Italian war so occupied his time that it was only occasionally, and then for rest and recreation, that he

could give brilliancy and pleasure to his kingly household at Blois, so that the queen was left much alone. Whether, however, he was present or absent, Queen Anne was the very spirit and life of the court. She showed in her whole demeanor a queenly bearing, which was dignified and firm, as it was founded upon no mere fancy, but upon real superiority of character. She had inherited from her father, Duke Francis II of Brittany, a great love for the sciences and fine arts; and this love had not diminished with years. She sought the society of the most learned and attractive spirits of the times, and assisted and sustained them wherever it was in her power. Beside, she brought to the palace several of the daughters of French noblemen, and had them almost constantly in her presence. The young ladies found in the society of this queen an excellent school. In regard to discipline and good morals, she was inexorably firm, but, at the same time, elegance and refinement were decidedly

apparent. She demanded from all who surrounded her, whatever had been their previous standing, absolute obedience.

So long as she lived she retained the entire control of the Duchy of Brittany, and knew well how to conceal every uncalled for, or what appeared to her unpleasant, influence against her proceedings. The king himself scarcely ever, if ever, was permitted to share in the government of this province.

Yet Anne was universally beloved, not only by those in her immediate circle, but also by the people in general. Though fully conscious of her dignity as queen, she was nevertheless condescending, and closed neither heart nor hand to the poor and needy. She knew exactly how to temper the natural parsimoniousness of her husband, and to change it to prudent economy. She harmonized least of all with him in matters of religion. He was frequently in arms against the reigning Pope, Julius II, who exerted himself in every

way to break the dominion of the French in Italy, while Louis made every effort to increase and strengthen it. The reciprocal antipathy became so great that the Pope excommunicated the king. Louis would have gone much farther in hostile acts against the Pope if Anne had not restrained him.

A historian of that time, Bernier, in his "*Histoire de Blois*," gives us the following account of his religious state: "He is pious and Catholic, without being hypocritical; for he is always careful not to offend God, and on every occasion expresses his gratitude rather with deeds than with words. It likewise seems to him that God is much better pleased when one manifests toward him a pure and undisguised will, rather than a long speech and elaborate gesticulations."

He founded but few new cloisters, being more intent on the reformation of those already existing, He re-erected a number of dilapidated churches.

Anne, on the contrary, had been trained in the strictest obedience to the Catholic Church, and therefore frequently disapproved the conduct of her husband. She even called forth a strong declaration of the people of Brittany against the Council to be held in Pisa in 1511, because at this Council measures would be taken to raise a barrier against the assumptions of the Pope, and to inaugurate improvement of the strongly rooted evils prevailing in ecclesiastical affairs. In this controversy, the scruples of Anne's conscience gained the ascendancy over the feelings of her heart and over her patriotism. Her husband was strongly opposed to her course, and on this occasion addressed these serious words to her: "Do you, Madame, think that you are more learned than so many doctors, who have given their approval to this Council? Has not your chaplain taught you the doctrine that women should have no voice in matters of the Church?"

Louis allowed himself to be persuaded as

little by the remonstrances of his wife as by the threats of the Pope. He labored with great earnestness for the sundering of the French Church from Rome, and the French people generally supported him, for they knew very well that only in this way could great accessions be made to the power of France. Anne's attachment to the Catholic Church not unfrequently took the form of impatience, and sometimes led to oppressive measures against the Jews.

A grief more profound than this, however, weighed upon Anne's heart through her entire life. During her first marriage she had three little sons, all of whom died in their infancy. By her second marriage she was called to mourn the loss of two more, being left now with only one little daughter, Claude, upon whom, alone, she lavished her heart's warmest affections for several years, until Renata, the subject of this book, was born. The mother had selected this name, signifying the *new-*

born (Renée), with the fond anticipation that her much-hoped-for desire would be gratified. The baptism of this little princess was celebrated with unusual splendor in the chapel of the palace. The entire palace, on this occasion, was decorated with the most beautiful tapestry, upon which were representations from both sacred and profane history.

Anne loved her children with the most ardent tenderness, always calling them, contrary to court etiquette, by their first name. She would never be absent from them but a few days at a time, and even then would arrange to receive intelligence as frequently as possible.

Claude was ten years older than Renata. She had been well trained, and possessed an open heart and loving disposition. She could not boast of a beautiful exterior; and was, therefore, in this respect, much inferior to her sister, which unavoidable fact was not very agreeable to her in her earlier days.

At one time, in a conversation that the king had with his wife upon the difficulty of finding a suitable husband for their daughter Renata, the queen made the following reply: "The love which is excited only from a beautiful exterior soon passes away; but the love generated from a sweet disposition and loving heart can not be exchanged or thrown away."

The public had already become interested in this marriage, and were desirous that no opportunity should be lost for the temporal or spiritual advancement of the young princess. There was no difficulty, however, in finding a suitable person for her; for while she was yet in her infancy the Emperor Maximilian desired one of the two, and especially the elder, for his grandson Charles. Anne was exceedingly pleased with this proposition. As she had been prevented a few years previous from marrying Maximilian, it was a great satisfaction to her to know that one of her children might become the affianced of his grandson.

A treaty was made in Blois, in 1504, that, if Louis XII were to die without a male heir to the throne, Claude, who had become the affianced of Prince Charles, should have, for her marriage dowry, Burgundy, Brittany, Milan, Genoa, and a claim to Naples.

This proposition was very disadvantageous to France, and the French people were opposed to its consummation; it was, therefore, abandoned in the following year. Anne then exerted herself to carry out a much-cherished desire that she had entertained for a long time, and this was to unite her family with the house of Austria. But the king and the French people had another plan, which was to unite Claude with Duke Francis of Angoulême, who would probably be heir to the French throne. Although Anne was opposed to this engagement, she comforted herself with the thought that perhaps through Renata her much-cherished wish might be fulfilled. This prospect, too, was blighted, as will be seen

hereafter, but without any unpleasant results.

It was Maximilian's desire that, as his engagement with Anne had been so wantonly broken at a previous time, the Princess Claude be sent to Austria as the affianced of his grandson. But this could not be accomplished, as there was a strong party in France strictly opposed to it, and especially Louise of Savoy, the mother of the probable heir to the throne.

This cunning and intriguing woman lived apparently in strict seclusion, as an exile, several miles from Blois, at the Castle of Amboise, as the widow of the Count of Angoulême.

But she could ill suppress her ambitious thoughts and plans, and labored in every way that she could against Queen Anne, who was very odious to her. These two persons, notwithstanding some points of resemblance, were of very different character.

The Countess of Angoulême was devoid of the moral earnestness and dignified bearing of the queen, and this may have contributed not a little to the mutual hostility. In vain did the king employ his efforts to bring about a reconciliation between the two women. No one knows what would have been the result of this enmity if, on the 9th of January, 1514, the death of the queen had not prevented any farther disturbance.

Almost all historians who have described the life of Anne unite in the testimony that she was one of the most perfect queens of her age, and that she by far excelled all her royal sisters by wisdom, piety, pure morality, and other virtues; and to her belongs the great merit of having brought back her husband from an unrestrained youth to a well-regulated and moral life.

The king had the following inscription placed upon her grave: "Earth and heaven have divided Queen Anne between them. The

earth has taken her body, which lies under this tombstone—the world will ever take the honorable rights of the queen—and Heaven has received her spirit for a permanent possession.”

The king, at first, was inconsolable over this affliction, and secluded himself for several days in his room, without even allowing his most attached servant to come to him; and we have every proof that this grief was sincere. He soon recovered, however, to all appearance, his usual cheerfulness, and sought out, with a view to marriage, his deceased wife’s most intimate friend. He thought, perhaps, by a third marriage a prince might be born, who would be heir to the French throne; and in this case he would have the pleasure of disappointing the Countess of Angoulême, who was making great calculations upon seeing her son Francis the ruler of the French. The king’s friends made several marriage proposals to him, but none met with his approbation.

Finally, he married Marie, sister of the English king, Henry VIII. But this marriage was of very short duration ; for as soon as the first of January, 1515, King Louis died. His death was mourned by the whole country, both by high and low. Every body felt it, and especially the French people ; for he had won for himself the title of "Father of the People." The love of the country people for him was so great during his life-time that, when he made a journey through the country, they would travel several miles to see him, and considered themselves very fortunate if they could come near enough to wave their pocket-handkerchiefs so as to touch his person or clothing. This handkerchief was then preserved by the fortunate owner as a most sacred relic.

Renata was yet too young to appreciate the blessing or the full advantage of having had such parents. But this blessing was not without its traces in her character and life. We

see in her what is so frequently overlooked in training, that the earliest years are of special importance in the formation of character, and that the impressions that one then receives can not be fully dissipated by any of the influences of subsequent life.

Renata preserved a loving remembrance for her parents. It was found later that she had expressed her thoughts, at that time, in her journal in the following manner: "In the first place, I am under obligations to my Heavenly Father that it has pleased him to create me, and to permit me to appreciate the magnificence of his works; and, further, I am grateful to him that he gave me a father who won for himself the name of 'Father of the People;' and that, too, I was born of a queen whose goodness and dignity were acknowledged by all who knew her, and that she bestowed upon me, from my earliest infancy, the tenderest affection. In addition to all these mercies, I am grateful that through severe

affliction he has sustained and kept me humble and lowly."

Undoubtedly, the chief virtues of Renata's parents were reflected in her character. From her mother she inherited that dignity which, according to circumstances, could ascend to heroism, and which was connected with a laudable sense of her position and birth. From her father she received her goodness of heart and love of righteousness, and a mildness and submissiveness which she exercised whenever it was necessary.

Upon the entrance of the new king, Francis I, to the throne, the life of the court assumed an altogether different character; and we can not assert that a change for the better occurred. Immediately after Anne's death Francis married Claude, the daughter of his predecessor. But she was not able to exercise over those amidst whom she was surrounded that spirit of strict morals which she had imbibed in her parental home. She had not been long

in her new position before she expressed a wish to return to Blois, which had become so dear to her, and here, far removed from the dissipations of the court, to spend the greater part of the year. The king complied with her wishes, and troubled himself very little about her as long as she did not interfere with his dissolute life.

It was then customary among the French nobility to send their daughters to the court of the king for education and culture. But, alas! the young ladies no longer learned here, as formerly, a correct view of life, but, rather, a frivolity and love for the world and its gayeties. The king himself took the lead by a bad example; even his mother stood in bad repute, and, by her general conduct, gave sufficient occasion for it. Only in one respect were the old times maintained or even improved. There prevailed among the royal families and the courtiers an ardent desire for learning, and a zeal in the pursuit of it. As is

well known, that was the period when the study of the ancient classics received new attention among the Western nations. Even ladies cultivated with ardor the Latin and Greek languages, in order to be able to understand the chief authors who had written in them. This taste for ancient learning was diligently promoted by King Francis, and especially by his sister Marguerite. Men of science and art received abundant encouragement and support from the royal family, and in consequence thereof their number greatly increased.

Renata was so fortunate as to experience only the beneficent, and not the deleterious, influence of the life of the French court. The atmosphere which she breathed was not laden with the pestilential spirit of the increasing moral corruption. Her sister Claude occupied still, as at her father's time, the castle of Blois; and she labored, as far as she could, for the welfare of the subjects, and the inhabitants of

the district of Blois, who had been committed to her management. She acquired universal love and respect because of her humane efforts ; and she was called simply the " Good Queen " by all who knew her.

She regarded the care of her sister, now five years old, as one of the most sacred duties that her parents had imposed upon her. She could take the place of a mother, and she did it, notwithstanding her own youth. Renata lived within her immediate circle, and found just what she needed in order to increase as in years so also in wisdom and the favor of God and man. She received all necessary instruction in every thing that cultivated and royal ladies of that period were accustomed to learn. All the persons who had any influence in her education were so carefully selected that they could not do otherwise than work for the development of the excellent talents of mind and qualities of heart of the young princess. Her real teacher, Michael de Saubonne—

Madame de Soubise—spared no pains to discharge the duty with which she had been intrusted. Since the deceased king had instructed her to educate his daughter aright, how could she fail in carrying out his important request?

Among the associates of Renata there was a young English noble lady, who has acquired a sad celebrity in history. This was Anne Boleyn, subsequently the unfortunate wife of Henry VIII of England, and who fell a victim to her husband's caprice. Renata was especially attracted to her, and cherished the most friendly recollection of her to old age.

A new and painful loss was soon to befall Renata. On the twentieth of July, 1524, her motherly sister Claude died, who, with her royal name, had found more thorns than roses. Even the king was overwhelmed with sorrow, at least for the moment, on receiving the news of the death of his good and virtuous wife. It did seem as if his conscience awoke

within him, and recalled to him the pains and sorrows that the queen had suffered on account of him. Yet this better feeling was merely transitory.

From this time forth, Marguerite of Valois, the king's sister, exercised so decisive an influence on the training of Renata that it is important that we should devote some pages to her in the present and following chapters. Born in the year 1492, she exhibited very early extraordinary endowments and an insatiable thirst for learning. She not only acquired a knowledge of a number of the modern languages, but of the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Besides this, she spent much time in cultivating a knowledge of the *belles-lettres* sciences; such as history, philosophy, and even theology.

In 1509, she was married to the last Duke of Alençon, in whose castle she spent the first years of her married life. When her brother Francis ascended the throne, he gave her a

home in his palace. Here she shone by virtue of her goodness, and especially by her learning, gentleness, and personal dignity. The king frequently sent to her the foreign ambassadors, and particularly such as he wished to win to his interests; for he knew that no one could resist the power of her eloquence. Both brother and sister, Francis and Marguerite, were so attached to each other by the bonds of real love as, in this respect, to be almost without an example in history. But Marguerite's life was elevated far above that of her brother. She was a noble exception to the corruption prevailing at the royal court, and hence the better spirits were especially attracted to her. Poets from all quarters lavished praises upon her. If there was any body capable of supplying to Renata the loss of mother and sister it was Marguerite. While she did not possess that moral earnestness that we have seen in Anne and Claude, she nevertheless withstood all the temptations

of a corrupt court. In every respect she found herself a true friend and reliable counselor for the orphan princess. Particularly in Renata's studies did she render important service, because of her great soundness of judgment in regard to education.

It is not surprising that Renata was very early lauded by her contemporaries for her remarkable progress in all branches of knowledge. Notwithstanding her want of outward beauty, she was, nevertheless, a lovely character, and whoever came in contact with her immediately forgot the want of physical charms when he saw how abundantly they were supplied by sterling inward qualities.

Many offers for her hand furnish abundant proof that foreign princes knew her worth. Once more a union between herself and the Emperor Charles V was talked of. Political grounds, however, decided against it, as they still do in Europe in matrimonial alliances of crowned heads. She was likewise desired by

the Elector James I of Brandenburg, to become the wife of his son, James II. Yet this plan, too, failed of consummation, as King Francis I found it would not be to his interest; and he had it in his power to arrange the marriage of this princess.

At this time, a totally different marriage project, and one quite in harmony with French interests, presented itself. It was this: That Renata should win to her side, and again to his country, General Charles of Bourbon, who had gone over to the Emperor Charles V. But it was reported, and with truth, that the king's mother, Louise of Savoy, had been casting a longing eye toward this stately man, and, by her cunning efforts, had made considerable progress toward the execution of her plan.

So Renata, at last, was obliged to become a sacrifice to French policy. King Francis wished to unite to himself the princely families of Italy, and especially the illustrious and

influential house of Este, which reigned at Ferrara; and when Hercules II, in 1527, desired the hand of the Princess Renata, Francis immediately gave his consent. A few months later, on the 28th of June, 1528, the wedding was celebrated, and Renata made the journey to Italy. She received, as a marriage dowry, thirty-six thousand dollars, and, besides this, an annuity of seven thousand two hundred dollars, as a revenue from several estates and castles that had been assigned to her. In return, she was obliged to renounce all other claims that she, under any pretext, could otherwise urge. On the occasion of the marriage, the duke, the father of Prince Hercules, presented to his daughter-in-law a jewel valued at one hundred thousand dollars.

In Reggio, they were received by Duke Alphonso, attended by the most brilliant of the nobility; and, on the 12th of November, in the same year, the princess entered Modena, where, sitting under a canopy of state,

she was received by the clergy and the people. They remained in this city until the 22d of the same month, where all was gayety and rejoicing. The city had been splendidly adorned, and great feasts and entertainments were made every day. The multitude of presents made by communities and individuals to the prince and princess can not be described. But still more magnificent were the festivities and splendor that characterized their reception in Ferrara. Amid the ringing of all the bells and the thunder of many cannon that had been placed on the banks of the Po and the ramparts of the fortifications, she entered beneath a canopy, her head adorned with a golden crown. After this, they were borne in a sedan-chair through the principal streets of the city, which had been decorated with red, white, and green flags, attended by eighty boys, sons of noblemen, who were dressed in carmine-colored cloth, wore red caps, and carried red staffs.

Princess Renata, though but eighteen years of age, soon succeeded in winning the hearts of her new subjects. She was friendly and kind toward every body, and, whenever she had occasion, opened wide her hand for the support of the needy.

Among persons of education she soon became beloved and respected, since she herself had attained a height of learning that was reached by few of her sex of any class. She had an extraordinary knowledge of the Latin and Greek, so that she was able to read the most difficult authors in these languages. In theology and philosophy she had made great progress. She had even studied astronomy and astrology. Hence, as might be expected, she was regarded as an equal by the learned men of her age. In one word, Renata, now of Este, was a remarkable phenomenon.



II.

THE REFORMATION IN FRANCE—MARGUERITE OF VALOIS.



RENATA'S youth, therefore, occurred at a time when a spiritual movement, like a continuous flowing of waters, inundated all lands, especially those of Western Europe. France could not remain unmoved by it; and, indeed, all the less so, because a century before a similar movement, although not to so great an extent, had taken place in the central part. In France, the hierarchy and the Church had met with no insignificant opponents to the prevalent ecclesiastical forms, who could hardly be suppressed by the power of arms. Who does not here

call to mind the Waldenses and Albigenses, and the crusade which was preached and conducted against them? The Waldenses lived in some of the mountain valleys of Piedmont, as well as on French soil, and the quiet and peaceful life which they lived, in all honesty and godliness, led the best members of the Church to meditation.

The French kings were often in battle against the assumptions and encroachments of the ecclesiastical power, as we have seen in the case of Louis XII, the father of Renata. It was necessary that this should be carried on with spiritual weapons, if it would arrive at a happy result; with the edge of the sword it was not possible to break the power of Rome. For this reason the Augustine monk of Wittenberg, Martin Luther, had done it more injury than a princely antagonist could possibly have done.

France had, at the same time, and even before Luther, produced learned men who, by

their investigations into the Scriptures, had arrived at the conviction that the doctrines held by the Church as valid, stood in manifold opposition to the Word of God.

One of these honest inquirers after the truth was Jacob Lefevre, a native of Etaples, a small town in Picardy. He had made himself extensively acquainted with the then known sciences, and the rich treasures of experience which he had gathered in his travels had freed him from many of the prejudices of his contemporaries. When he was intrusted with a professorship in Paris, he had no intention of entering into opposition with the Church. His lectures met with extraordinary approval, and were listened to by great numbers. For that very reason he excited the envy and suspicion of the theological faculty at Paris, the so-called Sorbonne. He was closely watched; but up to the time in question no cause of complaint had been found against him. He proved himself to be a

true member of the Church, especially as a worshiper of the Virgin Mary, and even had in view to rewrite the legends of the saints. He, therefore, made further investigations into the Scriptures, in order to be able to establish his account on a sure foundation. The result of his researches was, however, quite different from what he had expected. He was convinced that the doctrine of justification by works did not harmonize with his proposed work, and announced, independently of Luther, and even before his time, as early as 1512, the doctrine that man is justified only by faith in Christ.

Among the scholars in whom this living spark found fuel, who deserve special attention, is William Farel, who was born in the same year as Luther. He had inherited from his parents, and especially from his mother, an earnest religious feeling and a deep reverence for the Church and its requirements. He was, therefore, not a little shocked when his beloved

teacher expressed and defended the opinion that the exercises of the Church were without meaning, and that under some circumstances they were even pernicious, and that true salvation was only to be found by faith in Christ. William Farel searched the Scriptures for himself, and the result was, that he became more intimately attached to his teacher. They mutually encouraged each other. The old man moderated the fiery zeal of the youth, while the latter animated the courage and perseverance of the former.

A third associated himself with them, being of the same mind, and found a peaceful residence in a cloister near the city. This was William Briçonnet, Abbot of the Cloister of St. Germain, in the neighborhood of Paris, for a long time previously the royal ambassador to Rome. In this capacity he had become acquainted with the errors at the seat of its rulers. He determined, if it were in his power, to bring about a better state of things.

He, therefore, willingly extended the hand of friendship to these men. In the year 1516, he became Bishop of Meaux. In this position he was soon convinced how much room for improvement there was. Most of the priests lived far away from their parishes and their livings, in the rioting of city life, while badly paid and ignorant representatives, mostly monks, carried on the business of the parish in the true spirit of hirelings. Briçonnet wished to do away with this crying evil, and made use of the necessary measures; but he found more opposition than he had expected. These jealous ecclesiastics refused to comply with his arrangements. Since all his exertions appeared to be lost on the priests, the bishop endeavored to replace the unsuitable vicars by better ones. He needed, for the prosecution of this plan, some zealous assistants; and whom he called around him, in preference to all others, we need scarcely mention. They were Lefevre and Farel, and, besides, Michael

d'Arande and Gerard Roussel. These men preached in quite a different manner from what the people had been accustomed to hearing, and excited extraordinary attention. The bishop often entered the pulpit, and instructed the people, by taking the Word of God for his foundation, as to the true way to salvation. He also expressed the wish that the people might not follow his example, if he should ever speak contrary to this opinion.

Lefevre, at the suggestion of the bishop, translated the four Gospels into French, and the bishop distributed this translation throughout his diocese at his own expense. The consequences of these measures were very gratifying. Blasphemers, drunkards, sinners, and vicious persons of all kinds, changed their manner of life; bitter enemies offered the hand of reconciliation, and peace reigned in place of domestic and public strife. But this happy time was destined to be of short duration. Among the priests there were not a

few, as we know, who were much displeased with the reforms of the bishop. They made loud complaints against him and his collaborators, and bore their charges even to Paris. The Sorbonne made use of these complaints in order to cause the bishop to be suspected at court.

Briçonnet did not possess courage and resolution enough to steer firmly and immovably through the storm—which was arising on every hand—to the appointed haven. He had not aimed at a reorganization of the Church, in the spirit of the reformers; but rather at a moral improvement, in the spirit of contemplative piety. He was a mystic of the better kind. When he saw that his reforms could and must be carried further than he had intended, and that disquiet and inconvenience would arise to himself from them, he forbade his former companions to preach, and sent them out of his diocese. Some repaired to foreign lands, and others found protection with

Marguerite, the sister of the king. Only those dared remain and ascend the pulpit who had received permission afresh from the bishop.

Briçonnet was even weak enough to bring about a synod, in order to condemn the doctrines of the so-called Lutherans. He begged for a commission to visit his diocese and purify it from heresy. Lefevre's translation of the Bible was condemned to be burned. The bishop received pardon in consequence of his recantation and his new measures, while some of those, on the contrary, who, by his influence, had conceived an affection for the Gospel, paid for their conviction by banishment or death. Lefevre was also accused of being a heretic, and he would have shared the fate of his associates if the king had not protected him. The king wrote a letter to the Sorbonne, in which he eulogized him, and commanded further proceedings against him to cease.

King Francis had not won a firm religious stand-point. He was, as may be inferred from

what we have said, no blind, submissive adherent of Rome; on the contrary, he sometimes appeared to favor the ecclesiastical innovations. At last he believed he could make use of the teachings and principles of the Reformers against the monks—whom he thoroughly abominated—and against the hierarchy in general. He frequently brought the efforts of the persecutors to naught, and snatched from their hands those in danger. His mother, Louise of Savoy, appeared for a long time undetermined as to what course to take in regard to ecclesiastical progress. Marguerite, however, could make the communication to the Bishop of Briçonnet that, at the court, they were ever becoming more desirous for ecclesiastical reform. In reality, neither mother nor son had any idea of offering assistance to the evangelical Christians. The king thought he would have need of the Pope in his war with the Emperor Charles V. He also perceived that most of the French people were

resigned to the Papacy, and that it would be a hard battle for the Reformation to spread as in Germany. He feared the effect of dissension among his vassals and subjects, and thought if he were to defend heresy many would use it as a pretext for disobedience and refractoriness. In France the principle should be, *one king, one faith, one law*.

If the king did not leave the so-called fanatics at liberty, we must thank his sister Marguerite, who was the cause of it. This excellent woman had, with the greatest firmness, espoused the principles of the Gospel. She was in close connection with Briçonnet and his companions in faith, and had carried on with them a long correspondence. This correspondence shows us, in a remarkable manner, the shady side of the contemplative method of the bishop, and makes clear to us not only his conduct, but that of Marguerite, and, later, that of Renata. The mystical views of Briçonnet, according to which the

primary idea of Christianity is the spiritual communion with Christ and a quiet and contemplative life, are expressed in letters, sometimes from twenty to sixty pages in length. The doctrines of the Church and external forms are but seldom mentioned. From this correspondence, however, Marguerite had at least this advantage, that she was more and more drawn to the reading of the Scriptures. She sometimes read them for several hours daily, and induced her brother to follow her example, for a time, at least. At her suggestion, Briçonnet sent Michael d'Arande to the court, where he explained the Scriptures in presence of the king, which created no little surprise among the courtiers.

In 1524, when the king went to the south of France, in order to protect Provence against the invasion of Charles V, he was accompanied by his mother and sister; and in the suite of the latter was the preacher, d'Arande, who allowed no opportunity to

escape in referring his hearers to the one thing needful.

Francis, in the following year, joined the army in Italy, where he was taken prisoner, in the unfortunate battle near Pavia. Charles caused him to be conducted to Spain, where he was taken severely ill. During his absence, the dowager-queen, Louise, held the reins of government, in which she was supported by her daughter. Marguerite found opportunities, in that position, of showing her amiability of disposition. She made it a principle that no one ought to leave a princess sorrowfully, and conducted herself according to this rule. Where she could not assist, she knew how, by her affability and condescension, to comfort and win the heart. Her brother had a great longing, in his seclusion, to see her. She procured a safe convoy, and hastened, as quickly as she could, to Madrid, in order to comfort, and, if possible, to release him. While the emperor recognized the excellence of the

intercessor, and felt well disposed toward her, he relaxed none of his strong conditions.

In France, the enemies of the Gospel had taken advantage of the absence of the king and Marguerite to regain once more a firm position. They maintained that the defeat they had sustained was a manifestation of the anger of God against them, because they had not strenuously persecuted the heretics. Now the time had come to retrieve the error and fully make amends for the neglect. Moreover, it was thought that the Pope was more than ever necessary, in order to assist them to arise out of this need and embarrassment. As long as Marguerite was in Spain, there was not one at court who had rendered any assistance whatever to the persecuted; and it was evident, on her return, that her hands, on account of her position, were more than ever bound, so that she could not do what she otherwise would have done.

Her husband had died, in consequence of

the defeat near Pavia, and negotiations were being made with Charles, in order to insure peace by an alliance between him and Marguerite; but nothing resulted from it, although the emperor was personally favorable to it. Whoever came in contact with Marguerite could not remain cold toward her. On the 24th of January, 1527, Marguerite married again. Her second husband was Henry d'Albret, King of Navarre. In this new position, she labored beneficently as patroness of science and protectress of her fellow-believers. It is maintained that she had to suffer many annoyances from her husband, because of her love of the Gospel; but, if we recall what she actually did, and that boldly and openly, we can not do otherwise than suppose that it was done with Henry's consent.

The country began perceptibly to bloom under her influence. Education and order were maintained every-where. Whoever was persecuted on account of his religious opin-

ions, found safety and protection at the court of Nerac, for a shorter or longer time. The aged Lefevre, who was too far advanced in years to be able to win laurels in the battle-field of religious liberty, was, by the intercession of Marguerite, made librarian at Blois; but, as he was there exposed to the hate of his opponents, his patroness drew him into her vicinity, and transferred to him the superintendence of the library of Nerac. He died in peace, in the year 1534. He often reproached himself for not having fought and suffered more for the Gospel.

Marguerite appointed one of the fugitives from Meaux, the above-mentioned Gerard Roussel, as her court chaplain. She transferred to him, with the consent of her brother, the abbacy of Clairac, and, later, made him Bishop of Oleron, in Bearn. Roussel could not deny that he had belonged to the mystical school at Meaux. He therefore occupied an intermediate position between Catholicism and

the Reformation. He expressed his religious principles in an explanation of the Apostolic Confession of Faith. At the head of his doctrines he placed that of justification by faith, and he considered the Scriptures as the only guide for our faith. Christ is the sole Head of the Church, and he assigned to the apostle Peter no place above the other apostles. The true Church is the invisible communion of saints. He expressed himself indefinitely concerning the Lord's-supper, in order not to be involved in further controversy about it.

Marguerite shared these views, without doubt. Still she was of the opinion that mass should be celebrated with the hitherto customary ceremonies, but only as a congregational act of worship, never as private mass. The raising and worshiping of the host must then be discontinued. Ordinary bread should be used at communion, and the same should be broken. The chalice should be presented to all. Neither the Virgin Mary

nor the saints should be mentioned. It is scarcely possible to conceive how any one can entertain a doubt concerning the Protestant opinions of Marguerite, after such expressions. The Sorbonne declared the above-mentioned book of Roussel as highly pernicious and objectionable, and filled with abominable principles.

Marguerite was also a stumbling-stone and vexation for the Roman Catholic zealots. When she was in Paris, in the year 1533, and Roussel made known the Word of God in the chapel of the Louvre, a great tumult arose in the city. She was preached against on almost every side; one monk did not hesitate to say that she ought to have been tied up in a sack long ago, and drowned. A play, full of revilings against her, was written and performed in the theater. The Sorbonne condemned a much-read book of Marguerite's, called "The Mirror of a Sinful Soul," because the means of grace of the Catholic Church did not happen to be mentioned in it.

King Francis was exceedingly indignant at this outbreak of fanaticism against his sister. The monk who had adjudged to her the punishment of the sack, was condemned to the same punishment himself, and he was only pardoned at the urgent plea of Marguerite. The Sorbonne was obliged to revoke its judgment. On the side of the Protestants, the greatest confidence was placed in the influence of this woman. The dean of the Strasbourg Cathedral, who was disposed to Protestantism, commenced a correspondence with her, and transmitted to her some of the writings of Luther, translated into French. He hoped to be able, by her mediation, to give free scope to the reformatory doctrines in France. The answers of Marguerite prove that she was not averse to the undertaking.

The Swiss Capito dedicated to her his "Exposition of the Prophet Isaiah." He says in his dedication that all eyes were hopefully directed to her; and he hoped that she might

overcome the hinderances which rendered a knowledge of the truth difficult among women, and especially among princely women. Even the stern Calvin could not forbear observing in a letter to her, "I recognize the remarkable gifts which God has given you, worthy lady ; how he has made use of you for the advancement of his kingdom." The not less stern Theodore Beza expressed himself thus concerning her: "If she is equal to her brother in spirit and sagacity, she is in advance of him by her knowledge of eternal truth and her zeal for the Church of Christ."

We will not and can not say that she was a decided Protestant, and that she had totally renounced the Catholic Church. On account of her mystical opinions, she placed little value on externals. She never relinquished the hope that by proper reforms within the Church the schism could be corrected. It was her influence chiefly which determined her brother to negotiate with the German

Protestants, and especially with Melanchthon and Luther, as to how the separated Churches could again be united. Notwithstanding her repeated intercessions, many of the followers of the Gospel became martyrs. A nobleman by the name of Berquin escaped four times from prison and condemnation through her influence; but, on being indicted the fifth time, he ended his life on the scaffold.

The condition of affairs in Paris, in the year 1529, can not better be illustrated than by giving a description of a certain procession that took place at that time. All the relics of the city were collected together, as well as every thing at the service of the priests which was calculated to fascinate spectators. Bishops and common priests in great numbers bore the sacred relics through the streets. The king and the highest officers of the State accompanied them with uncovered heads; then followed a great multitude of believers. Six Lutherans were burned

that day on a movable gallows, with fearful torture. The king then affirmed "that he would pardon no one, not even his children and relatives, for the crime of heresy. If he knew that one of his limbs were affected with this spirit, he would hew it off with his own hand." Marguerite became constantly more and more alienated from her brother, the farther he proceeded in this course. Still she could never lose her earlier love for him, and he was not wrong when he thus answered the accusations that Marguerite had fallen away from the Romish Church: "She loves me too much for this ever to be possible."

Marguerite sought to make her court at Nerac a place of true Christian virtue. Clothed simply, like an ordinary citizen's wife, she showed her royal dignity only by her behavior. At her table the topics of conversation were, for the most part, upon religious and scientific questions, and foreigners who were admitted, were surprised at the

erudition and condescension of the queen. From time to time she withdrew to the cloister of Yusson, which she had caused to be built at Angoumois, in order, surrounded by pious men, to abandon herself undisturbed to contemplative prayer. Notwithstanding her retired mode of life, she was no devotee, or enemy to pleasantry. She wrote small comedies, and caused them to be performed by her maids of honor. Whenever she sewed or embroidered, she had some one about her to read aloud, or else she dictated to an amanuensis her thoughts, sometimes in prose and sometimes in poetry. She was never idle on a journey; even in her sedan-chair she indited letters or wrote on a book that she was composing.

The death of her husband, which took place in 1544, did not change her manner of life. She only cared more zealously for the welfare of her subjects, since now she could follow the impulses of her heart without any hinderance.

In 1547, when her brother was taken ill, she hastened immediately to him, and she had the great pleasure of seeing that her presence, in some measure, revived him again. Scarcely, however, had she returned home, when she received the news of his death, which took place on the 31st of March, 1547. Her sorrow was deep and unfeigned. She expressed her frame of mind in the verse :

“Thou messenger of fear to man,
Hast taken my brother dear away ;
Come soon, and bear me unto death,
And do not long thy steps delay.”

But before this wish was fulfilled she was obliged to experience many trials and sorrows. The new king, Henry II, the son of her brother, transferred the management of the affairs of State to her bitterest enemies, and soon forgot how much he was indebted to the beloved sister of his father. He tried to take away from her the annuity of twenty-four thousand livres which her brother had

allowed her. On the 21st of November, 1549, death released this rare woman from further strife and annoyances.

A French writer gives the following eulogium on her character: "Envy, which invariably attacks princes, could not impute a single evil deed to Marguerite of Valois. In order to perceive a stain in her character, we must invent one. A stranger to the vices of her mother, the folly of her brother, and the perversity of her times, beautiful and a queen without arrogance, virtuous without prudery, learned without pedantry, gentle and good without being weak, chaste in the midst of a depraved court, superior and true to both her husbands, she is, without contradiction, the most amiable princess and wife which the royal family of France has produced." Another writer says, "I fear I should never end if I were to enumerate all those whom she saved from the punishment of death and upon whom she lavished benefits."

Her enemies have sought to render her character suspected, on the ground of her literary activity. We will, therefore, cast a glance at her most important works. We have already directed attention to her "Mirror of a Sinful Soul—Miroir de l'âme Pécheresse"—which appeared in the year 1533. It is maintained by some that this book contains confessions of her own life-experiences. But how can we suppose that Marguerite would lay her sins before the world? Would she not, in conformity with her whole character, have been satisfied with confession before God? The entire keeping of the book shows that it represents the universal sinfulness of man, and refers to the comfort which, on account of the consciousness of our sins, may be found by faith in Christ. The spiritual poems, which some one published in the year 1547, under the title of "Pearls of the Pearl of Princesses," show an earnest moral character. We perceive from it that she aimed more at edifi-

cation than at entertainment. The little comedies, also, which Marguerite wrote, had, for the most part, a religious tendency. Her romances, which appeared first after her death, in the year 1558, under the title of "Histories of Fortunate Suitors," and which, in the following year, were dedicated to her daughter, Joan d'Albret, under the altered title of "Heptameron of Novels," afford the strongest grounds for suspicion.

These stories treat throughout of such love adventures as hardly any religiously educated woman of the present day would communicate. But we must judge of every work by the standard of the times to which it belongs. Besides, we must not overlook the fact that, by an admonition annexed to each story, Marguerite seeks to keep the reader free from vice. From the examples of human weakness she derives the doctrine that man must not abandon himself to his own strength; but that, in all cases, he should invoke the assistance of

God, since our strength rests in him. Marguerite may have committed a fault in these stories; she may, through the desire to appear witty, and to win literary fame, have been misled into writing these romances. Whatever may have been her intention, it is not necessary for us to express doubt, as some writers do, on account of them. Her memory still remains as that of one who was righteous, and therefore blessed.

We believe we have given the best answer, by what has now been written, to two questions with regard to Renata, which have hitherto been much discussed, and, according to the stand-point of the writer, with various results. They are these: By what means was Renata drawn to the side of evangelical Christians? and, What was her religious position when she came to Italy?

Renata could not have remained untouched by the religious movements which took place around her, especially when her second, or, if

we can say, her third, mother played so influential a part in this movement. She was bound to her mother by the most intimate ties of friendship and love; and did she not owe to her many of those suggestions and instructions on topics which occupied the best minds of her time? The remembrance of her father and his war with the Pope was not calculated to fascinate her with Catholicism in the form it had hitherto borne; neither could we expect that Renata would so soon show herself a decided Protestant. The relations in which she now lived were permeated with another spirit. It depended upon her further relations in life whether the religious ideas which she had chosen should be maintained. She still stood undecided between Rome and the Protestant Church. She had imbibed Protestant principles, but she believed, with many of her contemporaries, that she still could consider, and prove herself to be, a member of the Catholic Church.



III.

LITERARY AND RELIGIOUS LIFE IN ITALY.

HEN Renata arrived in Italy, the arts and sciences were in a state of great prosperity. A knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages was almost universally diffused among the educated classes, and many scholars had won great fame by their thorough acquaintance of these tongues. The many small princely courts which existed on the Apennine peninsula, had a tendency to promote scientific rivalry. They strove to surpass each other in their patronage of artists and scholars. Many rulers were obliged to oppress their subjects, in order to enable themselves to carry out this purpose. It is well

known what the Medici family, of Florence, accomplished by their love for art ; in Mantua, the Gonzaga family showed a similar zeal ; and the Este family, of Ferrara, into which Renata was received as of equal rank, did not remain behind its contemporaries. It belonged to one of the oldest families in Italy, although the tracing of the family back to the time of the Roman kings appears quite an effort of the imagination. Its possessions—Ferrara, Reggio, and Modena—were not of great extent, nor particularly lucrative ; still they could compare favorably with most princely Italian houses. If the Medici family patronized painting more especially, the Duke of Ferrara proved himself the protector of poetry and science.

Hercules I, of Este, an old contemporary of the Emperor Maximilian I, translated into Italian one of the comedies of the old Roman poet Plautus, and suggested the translation of other comedies and tragedies from the Greek

and Latin; he also caused many to be performed with all the magnificence of the ancient theaters. In the courts of Alphonso I and Hercules I, lived Ariosto, the poet of "Orlando Furioso." His house is still shown, near the library of Ferrara; it bears the inscription, written by the poet himself, "Small, but suited to me, and clean."

The father of the renowned Torquato Tasso, Bernardo Tasso, lived also for a long time at Ferrara. We can venture to say that scarcely a man of science had lived in Italy who had not received support, or at least proofs of esteem, from the family of Este. The University of Ferrara took a very prominent place among the universities of Italy, and it knew how to maintain itself as such amid the conflicts of the time. Not only did young men of Italy study there, but students came from almost every country of Europe, especially from England.

Hercules II, the husband of Renata, was

true to the scientific spirit of his ancestors. He could express himself with great felicity in prose and verse, and delighted to converse with learned men. He made a new collection of coins, at a great expense, and with it founded the celebrated Este Museum of Ferrara. He exhibited his taste for art by building several palaces in the city, and several villas on the banks of the Po. Unfortunately, there were but few agreeable traits in his character or morals. He allowed himself to be governed less by moral principles than by temporary circumstances, or caprice and passion.

His brother, Cardinal Hippolyte of Este, was not less known as a friend and promoter of science. He was Bishop of Ferrara, and Archbishop of Milan and of Auch in France; he was at the same time in possession of rich revenues, which he expended freely in the manner already intimated. He spent the most of his time at the beautiful villa of Belriguardo

and in the renowned gardens of Tivoli, in the embellishment of which he found pleasure and entertainment.

A historian of the house of Este, Muratori, says of him: "The table of the prince knew no more pleasant concert than the voice of a scholar, which was heard amid the silence of the guests. Intellectual conversation with the most excellent men formed the seasoning of the banquet. The prince, according to the judgment of all, deserves to be named the Father of Science."

Lollo, a Professor in the University of Ferrara, called the youths happy who studied in that institution, because it enjoyed the labors of the most learned and eloquent men, because it possessed great treasures in the Greek and Latin languages, and because so many strangers came to the town seeking improvement in science. On the other hand, the house of Este gave but little encouragement to improvements in accordance with the prac-

tical spirit of the times. The dukes immediately preceding had, it is true, several conflicts with the Pope, whose liegemen they were; and so it had been expected that they would join the movements which were directed against him.

But they knew better how to judge, under these circumstances. It could not be expected that these efforts would be crowned with success in Italy, especially when a powerful foreign prince stood on the side of the Pope, and granted him his support. No continuous co-operation of the Italian people in conflict with the hierarchy and its perversions was to be expected. A proper regard for self-preservation, therefore, caused the small princes to strive to keep up a good understanding with the Pope. The father-in-law and the husband of Renata also found it to their interest to preserve this connection. Still they were as little able to hinder the entrance of Protestant ideas as the Pope himself. The doctrines of

the Reformation were promulgated in Ferrara as early as the year 1528, and in 1530 the inquisitor of the city complained that there were Lutherans among both clergy and laity. They could have said the same of the whole of Italy.

How, then, would it have been possible to suppress the yearnings and endeavors of a people for relief from the ecclesiastical grievances, who had more opportunities than others to observe them? The See of the Supreme Bishop in Christendom was not by any means, as it should have been, the scene of all Christian virtues. One might, with much more truth, have maintained that moral depravity was there at home; and it is a remarkable circumstance that, just toward the end of the fifteenth century and beginning of the sixteenth, the worst Popes that history is acquainted with had won the triple crown. Along with the deepest superstition, the most insolent unbelief had taken root. Even Pope

Leo X, who reigned from 1515 to 1521, and to whom belongs a renowned place in the history of art and science, as well as in the history of Christian belief and life, more than once made use of the expression, that the "fable of Christ had brought him much money." The most learned cardinal of his century, Bembo, thought that he had never employed his time more disadvantageously than when he spent it in reading the Bible. Other learned Italians—as, for instance, Plethon, the Florentine—prophesied that the happy time would soon come when the Bible and the Koran would be looked upon as teaching religions similar to heathenism.

Truly, Christian minds must be most painfully moved by such expressions of unbelief; and still we shall find them explicable when we consider how little pleasing fruit Christianity bore at that time. Immorality had become much more general among all classes in Italy than in any other Christian country. The

episcopal courts imitated the Papal, and the common parish priests found in their superiors excuses for their own bad stewardship, and, indeed, all manner of iniquities. There were, however, better disposed men, who deplored the deep decline of morality and true religion. The preaching of the Florentine, Hieronymus Savonarola (died 1498), who, with unwearied zeal, had labored for a better state of morality, and with the greatest earnestness had prophesied that the righteous God would very soon bring a scourge upon Italy, and thereby bring about a change in the Church, was not wholly forgotten. At the time of Leo X, between fifty and eighty pious and learned men formed themselves into a society, called the Oratorium of Divine Love, who made a solemn promise among themselves to work with united strength against the corruption of the Church.

Since the year 1471, an Italian translation of the Bible had been circulated; and this passed through nine editions in twelve years.

It is not surprising that Luther found many friends and admirers among the Italians, and that many copies of his writings wandered over the snowy summits of the Alps. In the year 1519, the book-seller, Calvi of Pavia, sought to distribute the New Testament of Erasmus and several of the smaller writings of Luther, not only in his own vicinity, but also in other Italian cities. He was successful in selling the greater part of an edition of the smaller treatises of the German Reformer. The most of them were disposed of and read at Venice. The Papal Bull against Luther was read in this city only after every one had left the Church.

In the year 1500, a monk from the neighborhood of Lake Maggiore wrote to the Protestant Churches of Germany: "Ye believers and beloved in Jesus Christ! Remember poor Lazarus; remember, also, the Canaanite woman, who hungers for the crumbs that fall from her Master's table. A languishing wanderer

thirsts for living water. Sitting in the shadow of death, and bathed in tears, we pray you, who know the mysteries, to send us the writings of your excellent teachers, Zwingli, Luther, Melanchthon, Œcolampadius. Noble princes, pillars of the renewed Church ! hasten to deliver a Lombardic city ! We are only three brothers, united in the contest for truth ; but the strokes of a small number of men chosen by God, and not the swords of the thousands of Gideon, defeated Midian. Who knows but God, out of this little spark, may kindle a great flame ?”

The works of the Reformers made their way to Rome, and even into the Papal palace, although under fictitious names. The first connected exhibition of the Protestant system, which Melanchthon published under the title of “*Loci Theologicæ*,” was printed as the work of Ippofilo de Terra Nigra, an Italian translation of the author’s German name, and publicly sold in Rome for a year, and was read with

great approval. When the ruse was at length discovered, the remaining copies were burned. Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans and his treatise on the Doctrine of Justification were praised even by the cardinals and bishops as the writings of Cardinal Fregoso. Zwingli's writings were circulated under the name of Coriglio Logelio. Calvin's "Institutes of the Christian Religion" were distributed without acknowledgment of the author or the place of printing.

It was all the more difficult to prevent the ingress of Protestant works into Italy, as the communication between Germany and Italy, at that time, was very frequent. Young Germans studied at the Italian universities, particularly at that of Bologna, which was then greatly celebrated. Young Italians, on the other hand, were attracted by the fame of German scholars, especially of Melanchthon, and they, therefore, found their way to Wittenberg and other towns of the Father-land, in order

to seek advantages which they could not find in their own country.

The circumstance that the German Emperor, Charles V, ruled over a part of Italy, and that he had to sustain many conflicts there, was of especial importance. His commander-in-chief, Charles de Bourbon, without any fear of ecclesiastical censure, marched, in the year 1527, against Rome, and, after conquering the city, held the Pope a prisoner in the castle of St. Angelo.

On this occasion the Catholic Spaniards did not prove any better than the German Lutherans and the Reformed Swiss. They made no scruples in mocking the opponent of the emperor. A person disguised as the Pope was led about the streets of Rome, while others disguised as bishops followed him. Speeches were made in the procession, in which the unjust wars which had been occasioned by the Pope were hinted at. The Emperor Charles was chosen by God to revenge these

acts of violence. At length the soldiers cried, "Long live Pope Luther!"

We hear many complaints from zealous Catholics that the Protestant spirit was continually gaining ground. In 1530, Pope Clement VII complained that, in several countries, Luther's heresy was making rapid way, not only among the laity, but also among the priesthood and monks. Cardinal Caraffa, who afterward became Pope Paul IV, says, in a report, "that the whole of Italy is tainted with the Lutheran heresy, and that not only States, but many ecclesiastics, have gone over to it." We know that expressions of this kind were well founded when we compare them with those made by the friends of the Gospel themselves. The German Reformers won great applause and support on every side. Epithets such as "Great Luther!" are no rarity. In several of the Italian towns Protestant communities were formed, that of Venice being the most thriving. In this great and wealthy

city the sense of freedom and independence had been maintained with the consciousness of right, and the chief magistrate had often shown the Pope that he was not willing to submit unconditionally to his domination. Venice had formerly made a determined resistance against the introduction of the Inquisition, and only allowed the publication of the Papal indulgence, after a mature examination of them.

A letter which an eminent Venetian, Lucio Paolo Rosselli, sent to Melanchthon, fully testifies to the spirit which asserted itself in Venice. It had been reported in Italy that this fellow-champion with Luther, for peace's sake, was on the point of yielding too much to Catholicism, at the Imperial Diet at Augsburg. Rosselli, therefore, wrote to him: "O, Melanchthon! Let neither threats nor apprehensions cause you to forsake the banner of Jesus Christ. If you must suffer death in order to defend the honor of Christ, do not

delay. O, it were better to die honorably than to live and be covered with shame !”

A great number of Italians, of every age and position, from all parts of the Peninsula, were of the same opinion. In Piedmont, the ground was already prepared for the diffusion of Protestant principles, because of the nearness of the Waldenses. Collio Curione Secundo made his name famous in the history of the Reformation in Italy. He was born in the year 1503, near Turin. Besides the study of classical literature, he occupied himself with the reading of the Scriptures ; and the consequence of this employment was soon apparent, as he refused to join in the condemnatory judgments of those surrounding him concerning the writings of the Reformers. He wished, therefore, to see and read and examine for himself several treatises of Luther, the doctrinal system of Melanchthon, and the letter of Zwingli relating to true and false religion. “When I was still a young man,” he wrote,

later, to Melanchthon, "after having read several of your writings, I was seized with such a love for you that it seemed impossible that it could increase." His longing drove him to Germany, in order to purify his religious views by communication with her godly men. On his way he divulged his opinions in an imprudent manner, and was seized in the Valley of Aosta, and thrown into prison. The bishop recognized the distinguished talents of the young man, and determined, if possible, to bring him back into the bosom of the Catholic Church. Curione, therefore, was placed in a convent for instruction and conversion. But all in vain. The young man, in his zeal against the Catholic superstitions, went so far as to withdraw clandestinely from a chest of relics its highly-treasured contents, and put in their place a copy of the Scriptures, with the inscription, "This is the true Ark of the Covenant, wherein can be found the genuine oracles of God."

We may imagine the horror and anger of the monks when they discovered the sacrilege. Suspicion immediately fell upon the right man, and Curione was obliged to withdraw as quickly as possible, in order to escape severe punishment. He found a place of refuge for a long time in Milan, where he devoted himself to the instruction of youth. He also applied himself, at a great self-sacrifice, to the care of the sick and the poor. He distinguished himself particularly for his active Christian love while a pestilence was raging in the country, so that many hearts were full of affection and gratitude toward him. After a time, his love of the home of his childhood and youth reawakened so powerfully in him, that, laying aside every other consideration, he returned at once to Piedmont, where he remained for some time in quiet and peace. Still he could not remain silent when it was necessary to refute false accusations against the Reformers. Being present, on one occa-

sion, when a Dominican monk misrepresented the doctrines of Luther, in order to be able the better to revile them, he seized the opportunity to show how unfounded the utterances were. Once more he was thrown into prison, and the bishop himself traveled to Rome in order to bring about his sentence of death. But before the bishop returned, Curione had succeeded in getting out of prison.

He now taught for some time as professor at Pavia, where, by the privileges of the University and the assistance of faithful friends—the students having formed a voluntary watch to protect him—he was secured against the persecutions of Romish fanaticism. The Pope then threatened the University Senate with excommunication, while other complications were to be feared. Curione now took shelter under the protection of our Renata, at whose court he found a great number of kindred spirits.

By his side stood Bernardino Ochino (born

in Sienna, in 1483), for a long time the most renowned preacher of Italy. He assures us that he had felt from his youth a deep longing after paradise; but it was only at a later period that he recognized the right way thither. He thought by fasting, castigations, and the like, to succeed, and therefore entered the strictest order of Franciscans. This course he did not find satisfactory; for it went with him as once with Luther, he found not what he sought. When some of the members of the order formed a still stronger sect, under the name of Capuchins, Ochino joined them, in order to make sure his entrance into heaven by thorough mortification of the flesh.

After many struggles, a new light at length broke in upon him. From this time forth he studied the Holy Scriptures unceasingly, and was convinced that Christ, by his death, had done enough for our sins, and that the Romish Church did not teach in accordance with the Scriptures, and that it was, therefore, an out-

cast from God. His preaching became more and more zealous, and continually found more hearty approval. It was listened to and wondered at by the learned and ignorant, by high and low. The Emperor Charles V said, respecting Ochino, "This man would move stones to tears." He made all the greater impression because his life corresponded with his preaching. At the most sumptuous meals he drank no wine ; he ate of one kind of food, and that the most simple. If he were conducted into a richly adorned chamber, and admonished to rest from the fatigue of his journey on a soft bed, he always smiled, and stretched his mantle out on the floor, and there laid himself on it.

The churches in which he preached were not large enough to contain the multitudes who gathered together to hear him. Pope Paul III made him his confessor, and, in 1538, the chapter of the order of Capuchins at Florence chose him as chief of the order.

He was still permitted to preach, with great success, in different cities and parts of Italy; but his Protestant views constantly exhibited themselves stronger and stronger, and when the powerful opposition to the Reformation commenced in Italy, it was time for Ochino to leave his native land. Previously, however, he repaired to Ferrara, where all those who were oppressed took refuge. Renata provided him with letters of recommendation, and, in 1542, he wandered over the Alps to Zurich and Geneva, where he was received in a friendly manner.

What Ochino attained by his popular preaching, Peter Martyr Vermigli, born at Florence, in the year 1500, effected by his Biblical lectures. This man had, from his earliest youth, received a thorough education, and had been instructed in Latin by his mother. He inherited, also, from his mother that piety which distinguished him above all his contemporaries. His father appears to

have been no special friend to the Church in its existing state. At least, he was decidedly against his son entering a cloister; and, since the latter would not be withheld, he disinherited him, lest his property should fall into the hands of the monks. Peter found himself deceived in his expectations. His scientific efforts found no satisfaction in the narrow sphere of the cloister. At his wish, he received permission to continue his studies at Padua and other universities. He was beloved and esteemed by every one on account of his modest and blameless behavior, and his scientific investigations were of such a nature as to win the pride of his order. He was sent, in 1529, as a preacher, to Rome, Bologna, Pisa, and other cities. His fame increased daily, and the way to the highest spiritual dignities appeared to be open to him.

In his thirtieth year, he was elected Abbot of Spoleto, and, shortly afterward, provost of a college at Naples. Later, he was appointed

inquisitor-general of the Augustine monks in Italy. In every thing he proceeded with immovable justice, but at the same time with inexorable strictness. By continued study of the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Reformers, his views became constantly clearer; and he did not conceal the change which was going on in his mind. His danger was all the greater, because, by his strictness, he had made many enemies among the monks of his order. He was imprisoned; but not long after, through the influence of some of the nobility, he was again set at liberty. Still he felt the necessity, like so many others who held similar views, of seeking another home. Fortunately he reached Zurich, where he soon received an invitation to Strasburg as professor. He labored there, and, later, in England, with great success.

Antonio Paleario, the author of the far-famed work, "Of the Benefit of Christ," is almost still better known, at least in our day,

than Peter Martyr. This little work, which explains the doctrine of justification by faith, was, during the author's life-time, sold to the extent of forty thousand copies in Venice alone. The Jesuits and their companions, however, succeeded so well in doing away with this little work, that for several centuries it was considered lost; and not until lately was it found again, in an English library. Paleario was an esteemed Professor of Latin and Greek, at Sienna University. The zealous adherents of the Pope soon recognized in his teachings the prohibited views of the German Reformers; and, in order to be certain on this subject, he was obliged to undergo an examination. The question was put to him, "What is the first means which God gave to man, by which to attain salvation?" Paleario answered, "Christ;" and when asked concerning the second and third means, he gave the same answer. From this moment on, he expected the very worst treatment; for there

was ground of accusation against him. He escaped martyrdom, however, for several years. He received a position at Lucca, where the Inquisition had not yet gained firm ground; but, after remaining there a short time, he perceived the necessity of leaving. He went to Milan, but found no safety there; and, on his way to Bologna, he was seized by the emissaries of the Jesuits and conveyed to Rome. In the year 1540, after three years' imprisonment, he was condemned to the gallows and the stake.

At the ducal court of Ferrara, there lived, as surgeon, Pietro Angelo Marzelli, who, under the name of Marcellus Palingenius, published a poem, in which he boldly castigated the depravity of the times, both among the clergy and laity, and expressed pretty clearly his pleasure at the doctrines of the Reformation and their propagation. The book was interdicted; and, at a later period, the corpse of the author was delivered to the funeral pile.

Women, also, especially such as had attained the highest culture of their century, and had made themselves acquainted with classical literature and philosophy, placed themselves, and in some cases with masculine firmness, on the side of Protestant Christians. We will mention the Duchess Vittoria Colonna, of Naples, who, celebrated as a poetess, lived, after the death of her husband, in retirement from the world, and gave herself up to study and religious contemplation. We must not forget Julia Gonzaga, also of Naples, the most beautiful Italian woman of her time, who gave protection and support to many of the disseminators of the Gospel, and for that reason was enumerated among the "women suspected of a godless heresy;" nor Isabella Manrecha, of Bresegna, who, pressed by her relatives either to renounce her faith or forsake her country, chose voluntarily the latter, and first in Germany, then in Zurich, then in Chiavenna, in the canton of the Grisons, seemed to forget

her earlier splendor, and lived in poverty and retirement.

Of two other women to whom place of honor belongs in the history of the Reformation in Italy—the Princess Lavinia de Rovera and Olympia Morata, the most learned females of Italy—we shall hear more when we consider intellectual life in Ferrara.

If we place our eyes upon such persons as those mentioned, if we consider how many thousands in all Italy agreed with them, and what stirring life there was in the Protestant communities, we would come to the conclusion that but little was required to give the Gospel the victory; but it was not to be so.

Among those inclined to the Gospel, there were some who did not wish to come to an open rupture with the Romish Church. They wished to improve its doctrines, and especially to procure the admission of the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. They wished to do away with the crying

abuses in the regulations of the Church, as well as the ignorance and immorality of the clergy; but they wished to preserve the Catholic hierarchy, the Catholic worship, and other institutions. They did not wish to be convinced that in this manner no benefit could be derived. There were some of the most celebrated dignitaries of the Church who shared this opinion; for instance, the Venetian Contarini, and the learned Marco Antonio Flaminio.

In general, Italy was not a favorable ground for the success of Protestant principles. The people lived in total ignorance, not to say in thoughtless stupidity. Catholic worship, with its ceremonies, so flattering to sensuality, pleased them more than plain and sober evangelical Christianity. The legends and miracles of the saints, which are always so captivating to the Catholic people, quite satisfied them. The moral earnestness which animated the Reformers to make their bold

endeavors, was not to be found among the Italians; and the affairs of the Pope were still considered a national concern, so that the Italians looked upon any attack made on his power and dignity as directed against themselves. It might, therefore, be foreseen with certainty that, if the reaction should anywhere ever gain the victory, this would be the case in Italy. Calculating prudence, therefore, required at least a want of sympathy with religious conflicts. Whoever, on the contrary, mixed himself with the combatants, and particularly with those who bore the banner of the Gospel to the field against the Chair of St. Peter, undertook an enterprise which brought him into great danger. The Protestant confession demands courage and self-denial.





IV.

HAPPY DAYS AT FERRARA.

ERRARA was a place in which Renata, by the peculiarities of her nature, could not feel otherwise than at home and happy. She was permitted to live agreeably to her inclination, and to satisfy her thirst for knowledge. With the large revenues which she drew from France she was enabled to perform many beneficent acts, for doing which her new position gave her abundance of opportunities.

We will not conceal the fact that, under the sway of the family of Este, neither the better classes nor peasants rejoiced in any particular prosperity. The dukes carried on, as was the

custom of people of their rank, an altogether too expensive court life, and did not calculate, in supporting artists and scholars, whether their revenues were sufficient for the purpose. They were, therefore, necessitated to burden their people with oppressive taxes. They also neglected, which was the most unpleasant of all, to make regulations which were necessary, or at least desirable, for the welfare of the country; and if Ferrara and the neighboring country had to contend with financial difficulties for centuries, it is to be attributed to the extravagance of their dukes.

It may be easily imagined that one sympathetic heart, at least, was frequently and severely taxed. Renata did not belong to that class of individuals who possess worldly goods and close their heart and hand against a needy fellow-being. One of her biographers says of her: "If this princess was intelligent, witty, and virtuous, she was at the same time distinguished for the benevolence which she

extended to her new subjects. Every one that I have seen in Ferrara is rejoiced at her, and say all the good in the world of her, for all have shared her love, and the French especially have been the recipients of it. She had the goodness never to forget her native country, although she was far distant from it." She granted bountiful assistance to every Frenchman who traveled through Ferrara and appealed to her for help in time of need; she at least gave the traveler sufficient money to enable him to continue his journey home. When one was too sick to travel she had him carefully nursed until he was well again. If the manager of her house remonstrated concerning her great expenditure, she answered: "What would you have me do? They are poor French, my own people, who would all be my subjects if the Salic law did not keep me from the throne with too great strictness."

It is said that she extended a helping hand to many thousands of her countrymen,

in one way or another. Still no one could reproach her with neglecting her new subjects. Whoever needed help she regarded as her "neighbor." Her domestic life, during the first years of her marriage at least, was very happy. Her husband was a remarkably handsome man, and he knew how, by his noble bearing, to win the hearts of those with whom he came in contact. Still he was not adapted to quiet domestic life, and the bounds of matrimony were far too narrow for his restless spirit. He was also betrayed by his ambition into adventures which caused him and his relatives many troubles and vexations. Nevertheless, he did not fail in expressions of tender love for Renata; he wished by them to compensate, in a measure, for the cares with which he burdened her tender heart. He placed no impediment in the way of her following the best promptings of her nature.

She was permitted to retain the people of her country who had accompanied her to

Italy, and who had, in part, been her friends and teachers in youth. The chief ones of the number were her former governess, Madame de Soubise; this lady's son, Jaques de Parthenay, who was, at a later period, one of the first Protestant champions in the French religious war; and Anton de Pons, her son-in-law. The wife of Anton de Pons deserves especial attention. The learned Lilio Giraldi says of her, in the dedication of one of his Dialogues: "She was not only well versed in Latin, but also so well in Greek that she was able to read the most difficult authors. She was more learned in this department than we can imagine. What shall we say of her poetical talents, and of her wonderful gifts in music, which astonished every one? Yet these were merely trifles, only gifts for pleasure. Her most wonderful endowment was her clear knowledge of the Scriptures, which was so great that professional theologians desired to learn of her."

The poet Clement Marot, who had at that time already acquired a reputation by his translation of the Psalms, and who, because of his Protestant proclivities, had been obliged to flee from France, also found a friendly reception at Ferrara. He became secretary of the duchess.

An admirable young Frenchwoman, Anna de Beauregard, died in Italy, and Renata had the following inscription placed on her tombstone: "Here rests Anna de Beauregard, who, in joyous childhood, left parents, father-land, friends, and France, and promised to follow here the Duchess Renata, to whom she dedicated her whole life, and for whom she sacrificed companions, beauty, and blooming youth, until she went to seek in heaven the better inheritance, and left the world with less regret than she had once left France, with her pilgrim staff in hand."

Renata sought comfort among these her countrymen and women, when sadness and

grief overwhelmed her tender heart. She communicated to them all the news from France, whether joyful or sorrowful, and particularly that concerning the fate of the Protestant Christians, to whom she never ceased to devote much attention and sympathy. She found abundant compensation for the many sorrows which oppressed her heart in the joy she had in her five children, who were richly endowed in both body and mind. They were as follows: Anna, born on the 16th of November, 1531; Alphonso, born on the 22d of November, 1533; Lucretia, born on the 16th of November, 1535; Leonore, born on the 17th of June, 1537; and Luigi, or Louis, born in 1539.

The mother expended the greatest possible care and attention on the training of these children; she spared neither trouble nor expense in order to give them such a degree of culture as, according to her view, was befitting the scions of a noble, princely house.

The most celebrated teachers that could be procured were employed, in order to impart the necessary instruction. Among the number were Celio Calcagnini, Lilio Giraldi, Bartolomeo Riccio, Marcelli Palingenio, Marco Antonio Flaminio, Kilian and Jean Sinapi (these two were Germans and brothers, their real name being Senft), Fulvio Peregrino Morato (formerly tutor of the younger brothers of the duke). The eldest daughter, Anna, met, at an early age, the wishes and expectations of her mother. She made surprising progress in her knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, and could express herself with precision and skill in Italian.

In her tenth year, an age when most children can barely speak their mother-tongue correctly, she could repeat by heart select quotations from Demosthenes and Cicero. She also made, about this time, a translation of Æsop's Fables. She was greatly aided in her studies by a companion, who was five

years her senior, and really a prodigy of her sex. This was Olympia Morato, the daughter of Peregrino Morato, whom we have mentioned, and who has a place of distinction among the scholars of Italy. Olympia was born in the year 1526, at Ferrara, and was instructed during the early years of her life into the sources of classical education. The German, Kilian Sinapi, was her first instructor in Greek and Latin, and, in an incredibly short time, she comprehended the languages of Homer and Virgil. The most learned men of the city sought the acquaintance of this rarely gifted girl. Every one was astonished at the learned responses she gave. Her name and fame could not remain concealed from the Duchess Renata. Whom could she have appointed as companion to her children better than this most distinguished young lady of the city, and perhaps of all Italy. Olympia was also happy to receive the honorable invitation to become a companion of the prin-

cesses, and to assist them in their studies. At home she had frequently been obliged to bestow attention on domestic affairs, and she deplored each hour that was taken from her learned labors.

Celio Calcagnini, one of the most brilliant meteors among the many luminous phenomena of Ferrara, wished Olympia every success on her entrance into the ducal palace. "Thou canst," he wrote, "devote thyself in future to thy chosen studies, change the distaff for the pen, linen for books, the needle for the implements of thought. Behold, in order to facilitate the accomplishment of thy wishes, and to increase thy fame, fate has called thee by a special favor to the court of the duchess and the society of her daughter, whose rare talents seem to promise an honor to her parents equal to that which she has received from them. Thy business is to preserve the treasures which thou hast received from thy parents—namely, morality, modesty, and piety—and to

combine with them female delicacy, generosity, and the contempt of all littleness." Thirst for learning did not undergo any change by Olympia's residence at the court, but, on the contrary, received a new impetus. The Princess Anna became very fond of her young instructress. The difference of age and position appeared to be forgotten by both.

There lived another young lady at the court who was worthy of being the third in this beautiful trio, and this was the princess Lavinia de Rovera, who was likewise endowed with rare mental gifts, and of the noblest qualities of heart. Olympia became her most intimate friend, and the tie which united them was so firm and enduring, that, at a later period, neither time nor distance was able to loosen it. The fame of the young scholar soon became so universal that she was necessitated to give public lectures, and to take part in scientific disputations. The learned Celio Secundo Curione made the following report

concerning that time: "Then we heard her lecture, now on Latin studies, now speak extempore in Greek, and now explain orator or poet, and answer all questions which were put to her."

At the age of fourteen she wrote a masterly defense of Cicero against the attack of a certain scholar, and the already-mentioned Calcagnini assigned this little book a place among the precious treasures of his library. Soon afterward, she recited poems in Greek and Latin, among which was a hymn which she had composed in the style of the Greek poets, Pindar and Sappho, and which became very celebrated. Such a young lady could not fail to receive appreciative and flattering acknowledgements. We will give extracts from a letter which Lilio Gregorio Giraldi addressed to her, because, at the same time, Renata is mentioned in the most complimentary manner. He says: "Gloriously and in lovely grace thou standest, thou who wert educated in the courts

where virtue has its home, among the female choir of the children of Renata, and in constant communication with the muses! Happy the princess who is served by such a lady! Happy the parent who gave thee life and blessed thee with the significant name of Olympia! Happiest of all, the man to whom thou shalt extend thy hand as wife—if ever a man shall have that fortune! I, myself, feel fortunate if, in the midst of pain, such a maiden shows me favor in my gray old age.”

The duchess did not fail to prove her love and good-will toward Olympia. When the latter was ill, and in need of motherly care, Renata allowed her, although with a heavy heart, to be carried to her parental home in the ducal sedan, and in the same manner secured her return, which was celebrated by the whole court as a joyful event. The children of the duke could not keep pace with this favorite of the muses; but her influence over

them could not be mistaken. Anna made translations of the old writers into Italian, and *vice versa*, and in this way won the highest praise. The learned Calcagnini wrote to her: "I have read the fables which thou hast translated from the Tuscan into the Latin language in such an elegant and beautiful style as becomes a royal hand. I only experienced pain when I had finished reading them, because I came so soon to the end, and because my curiosity could not longer be satisfied. I hope these efforts, as a seed of thy future perfection, will ripen and bear fruit to the honor of thy name. I have been pleased to-day to applaud thy first work on the stage of fame."

In the year 1541, the same scholar gave expression to the following language: "The cheerful leaves which thou hast presented to me appear to deserve Roman citizenship and the honor of the toga, with which they might appear before the senate and the patrician courts. I have retained them in order to

rejoice in their society a little longer, and, in order to be comforted for thy absence, I have promised them symbols which will make them still more beautiful. They have begged of me the favor to be allowed to return to thee. It is enough for them that they have received adornment from a hand which could even have beautified the graces."

We can not regard this as an overdrawn piece of flattery, when the historian Brantome says of the princesses, "The daughters of Renata were very beautiful, but their mother gave them a still greater beauty, inasmuch as she had them instructed in the arts and sciences, in which they became so perfect as to shame the most learned, and while they possessed beautiful features, they possessed still more beautiful souls."

When Pope Paul III visited Ferrara, in the year 1544, an opportunity was offered of giving evidence of the talents of Renata's children. Duke Hercules wished to make the

relations of his family to his liege lord better than they had been under his father and grandfather. He gave, therefore, all necessary orders to prepare for his high guest not only a splendid reception, but also to make his residence as agreeable as possible. First of all, he welcomed and lodged him in the charming villa of Belvidere, where he and his whole family were stopping.

The villa and its surroundings were adorned in such a magnificent manner that one could almost imagine himself transferred into fairyland. Among other festivities, there was to be the performance of a Latin comedy, "The Brothers of Terence," in order to celebrate the presence of the Pope, and to pass away the time. The duke's children were among the actors, and the chief parts devolved upon them. The Pope, as well as all the other spectators, were astounded at the perfection of the representation and diction, which they had not expected from children of such a

tender age. This high and distinguished guest remained at Belvidere and Ferrara for several days; and each day, and we might say each hour, presented fresh festivities, so that the Pope was greatly delighted with his visit. At this time he had several confidential conferences with the duke, the results of which were, after a time, plainly visible.

Renata did not show, in the exercise of her hospitality, that she was of a different mind from her husband in regard to the Papacy. She willingly exerted herself to the utmost to preserve the honor of her house. She appears to have interfered but little in affairs of State. She let the duke do as he pleased in this respect; and, indeed, if she had tried, she would have exercised but little influence upon him. She vied with the learned men in declarations of good-will, but from quite a different motive. She did it more for the sake of the thing itself than for the honor of receiving the name of a feminine Mæcenæ in history.

Among the celebrated scholars who sympathized and rejoiced in her proceedings, the following are the best known: Bembo, Soderlet, Paleario, Peregrino, Morato, Lilio and Giovanni Battista Giraldi, the brothers Sinapi, and others. She communicated with these in the most kindly and confiding manner. She listened to their discourses, and drew them into her society at court. She gave earnest attention to their writings, and offered them her helping hand whenever they needed it. A learned life and effort at Ferrara required her fostering care, such as has been seldom repeated in a town of that size. Volumes might be written, containing the names and services of the masters of science and art who were then congregated at the residence of the Duke d'Este. All these men gratefully recognized the encouragement and advancement which they owed to their patron, and especially to their amiable patroness. They contributed much, by the dedication of various

works, by poems and letters to her, toward making the name of Renata immortal.

In the year 1540, Andrea Bruccioli dedicated to Renata his Italian translation of the Bible. He bestowed upon her, in the dedicatory letter, the most beautiful testimony to her unshaken courage, her extensive knowledge, her fervent piety, and her charity. Most of these learned men at the court of Ferrara were attached to the Protestant doctrines, and had sought protection in that city against the persecutions of religious fanaticism. All were not equally decided antagonists of Rome. Marco Antonio Flaminio, for instance, sought to occupy an intermediate position. Others, on the contrary, expressed themselves determinedly, and none more so than the brothers Sinapi and Lilio Giraldi. There was no formally organized Protestant community at Ferrara; but those possessing these sentiments often met together, in order to strengthen each other. Renata was in

frequent communication with them, although she constantly took part in the Catholic service. She proved herself a worthy scholar of the well-known Marguerite de Valois, and was as indifferent to outward forms as the latter.

At first, the duke did not notice how much the seed of the Gospel was being disseminated in his neighborhood, or perhaps he did not wish to notice it. An open rupture with the Church of Rome was not to his interest. Besides, he cared but little for religion. He was too much given to unbelief to be considered a faithful member of the Romish Church; and he only sought to maintain peace and friendship from political motives. So long, therefore, as his wife fulfilled outwardly the demands of the Church, and so long as the learned men in Ferrara attempted no direct hostility against the Pope, he remained quiet. He cared very little whether these men were of the Catholic or Protestant faith. He was conscious, however, that he

could not sustain a critical examination of the thoughts of his heart, and that in other respects Renata had to reproach him. Perhaps this state of things would have continued for some time, if Renata had not been driven from her accommodating position to greater resoluteness.

In the Autumn of 1535, there appeared a man at the court of Ferrara who knew well what he wanted, and to whom the halting between two opinions was a crime. This was John Calvin, the second founder of the Reformed Church, but the most important of all. He had been obliged to flee from France because of his religious views, and since he had heard of the religious movement in Italy, and of the Protestant sentiments of Renata, he came to the conclusion to cross the Alps, in order to convince himself if matters actually were as they had been represented to him. He also wished to see if he could not do something to aid in the extension of the Gospel on

Italian soil. If it were possible to overthrow the dominion of the Pope there, the victory of the Reformation would then be secure in all the countries of Europe. He, therefore, started joyfully on the way, and arrived at Ferrara under the name of Charles d'Espeville. He had concealed his true name because he feared that, if it were known, so strong a prejudice would be raised against him that he would not be able to accomplish any thing. Nor did he dare to conceal from himself the fact that he would be subjected to the greatest danger of being seized or put to death by the adherents of the Pope.

But, with his name, John Calvin had not laid aside his nature. He had frequent conversations with Renata, and he did not neglect, on these occasions, to represent earnestly to her, her former irresolution, and to admonish her, openly and without fear, to recognize the Gospel, and entirely renounce any participation in the Catholic worship. During his residence

in Ferrara, the friends of the Reformation assembled in a small chapel belonging to the ducal palace, in order to pray in common, to read the Bible, and to listen to the discourses of the Reformer. His countrymen at the ducal court, and the Duchess Renata herself, were very attentive auditors. But Italians of both sexes attended in great numbers. For some time, the duke appeared to be ignorant of what was going on; and, indeed, did not know who the stranger was who made such a commotion in the little circle. Whenever he came in contact with him, he was astonished at his acute and profound mind. He recognized in him only the man of science, not the zealous Reformer.

But the influence of Calvin and the effect of his preaching could not long remain concealed. In place of the former uncertainty, there was now great resolution. The Protestant Christians manifested their belief in word and deed. The mask of Roman ecclesiasticism fell, and

disclosed the countenance and bearing of the true believers of the Gospel.

The duke could remain passive no longer, if he wished not to break with Rome. At first he thought it would be enough to remove the guest, who was manifestly the principal cause of the growing revolution. Calvin, or rather Charles d'Espeville, as he was always called, was obliged to leave Ferrara, after a residence of about six months. It must, however, ever remain undecided whether he, aware of the threatening danger, departed voluntarily, or whether he was formally banished. It was reported that he was arrested in Ferrara, in order to be conveyed to Bologna, but that on the way he was overtaken by masked horsemen, and freed, as Luther was on his return from Worms.

But the removal of Calvin did not destroy his influence. The seed sown by him could not be extirpated. Even when Clement Marot was compelled to leave the city, many still

remained behind, who did not waver in the faith, but, on the contrary, helped to strengthen others. From that time to the end, Renata preserved the strictest adherence to, and the highest esteem for, Calvin. She was in frequent correspondence with him, and was, therefore, greatly comforted and encouraged. Even at this time she did not, according to external appearance, leave the Catholic Church. In one respect, she was obliged to have regard for her position, and avoid every thing which could cause surprise; another cause of her course was, that the impressions of her childhood and youth continued to exist and to have their influence. She also believed that she was able to set Protestant piety at work in the midst of Catholic forms. Calvin had always some fault to find with her, and something to improve. She still extended her protecting hand, where it was possible, toward all French and Italians who had been obliged to suffer persecution for the sake of their faith.

Calvin, from a distance, continually kept a watchful eye upon her, and came quickly to the rescue whenever she was on the point of yielding at the expense of Protestant truth. We are much astonished when we consider the candid expressions and the imperious demeanor of the Reformer toward the duchess. The superiority of mind over the advantages of external position is here strongly manifested. Calvin felt himself called, no matter how or when circumstances demanded it, to devote much attention to a princess who was exposed to temptations from every source.

A priest named François found admission to Renata, and persuaded her and the courtiers, that they could attend mass in the Reformed manner, and in the same way celebrate the Lord's-supper. Calvin, therefore, wrote a long letter to the duchess, in the year 1541, from which we will make a few quotations. "Worthy lady," he wrote, "I beg most humbly that you will not misjudge my bold-

ness, inasmuch as I take the liberty to address these lines to you ; for you must consider that, if there is too much candor, it does not proceed from arrogance, but from a pure and sincere desire to serve you. Since I have confessed myself as an unprofitable servant of the Church, it has appeared to me advisable to render any service to you, according to the grace which the Lord has given to me. I have even thought that it was indispensable on my part so to act, if I would perform the duty which I feel that I owe you, and to care for you spiritually as far as possible. When I consider what a high and important place the Lord has given you, it appears to me that all who are called to serve the Lord must feel compelled to offer you assistance, and all the more so, because princely persons like yourself are able to promote God's kingdom greatly. Besides, I have found in you such a fear of God, and such a longing to serve Him, that, apart from the elevation which God has given

you among men, I regard God's manifestations of grace toward you as abundant and significant, so that I should hold myself accursed if I allowed the opportunity of serving you to pass by unimproved. And this I say without flattery, but with a sincere heart."

Calvin then characterized the priest, whom we have mentioned, in any thing but a favorable manner, and gave the assurance that he had heard of this offense, and had been impelled to write this letter. The news had been communicated to him by travelers, who did not know that he would write to her. He did not indulge the least hatred against François; but, as he had noticed that he distorted the Word of God, and extinguished the light of truth in it, he could not overlook the matter. François had ever been ambitious, and labored for his own interests, and conducted himself according to the men with whom he came in contact; he had even solemnly boasted never to take part in the

mass, since it was an abominable action. He preached the Gospel only to procure favor and benefit, and proceeded on the principle of displeasing no one who could ignore him.

Concerning the mass, Calvin said it was, according to the doctrine of the Catholics, a sacrifice for the redemption and salvation of the living and the dead. It was a blasphemy not to be endured, by which the suffering of Christ lost its significance. If the death of Christ was to be recognized as the single sacrifice which was offered once for all, its intrinsic worth was taken from it by the sacrifice of the mass. In the Bible the curse of God is pronounced on those who should serve strange gods and idols. According to the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord would rather that a man give himself entirely to the worship of idols, than that he should hesitate between His laws and human ordinations. We must not vacillate between those things which God has required and forbidden, nor direct

ourselves according to the judgment of the world. We must especially avoid those things whereby we may become a stone of stumbling and vexation to others. If we would flee from all at which the world stumbles, we must forsake the world. Christ also had been a stone of stumbling and vexation to many.

Renata was not angry at the bold language of the man, who, under a rough exterior, concealed a benevolent heart. She could not, in all cases, immediately comply with all his desires ; but his admonitions were never given to her in vain. She ever became firmer and more decided in her Protestant sentiments. She only sought to avoid all unpleasant relations with her husband. It was her duty, for the sake of her children, to do whatever she could to preserve peace and unity in her marriage relations. We, therefore, believe ourselves fully justified in considering the duchess, at this time, an evangelical

and Protestant Christian, which she was regarded as by her contemporaries, and loved and praised, or blamed and persecuted, accordingly.





V.

DIVINE VISITATIONS.

HE reader may have anticipated, from the conclusion of the last chapter, that the delightful days at Ferrara would soon come to an end, and that sorrows and afflictions would take their place. The ecclesiastical reaction was soon in full progress, and its path was marked by imprisonment and blood. During the reign of Paul III (1534-49), or at least during the first part of it, mén of wavering disposition had received influential ecclesiastical positions, and had even been invested with the dignity of cardinal. One of them, Contarini, was present as Papal Legate at the Imperial Diet at

Ratisbon, in the year 1541, so that it was hoped that in some measure a satisfactory agreement would be arrived at.

But this was not the case. It soon became clear that not a hair's-breadth of concession could be expected from the Pope. Even the little which Contarini had yielded did not meet with his approval. The stricter party became stronger and stronger, and they never ceased to insinuate to the Pope that it was just by those men of Protestant leanings that the Reformation was nourished and the enemies of the Papacy strengthened. The approaching change soon showed itself. All the more mildly disposed persons lost their influence, and some inclined once more to strict Catholicism.

In the year 1542, the Catholic zealots obtained the introduction of the Inquisition for the suppression of heresy on both sides of the Alps. The inquisitors received the power to examine every one at pleasure, without refer-

ence to position, honor, sex, or age, to throw the suspected into prison, and to punish the guilty with the confiscation of their property, or even with death.

From the year 1534, no book was allowed to be printed without permission of the Inquisition. Moreover, all heretical writings, which were carefully searched for, were seized and burned. Some books, as the one already mentioned, on the "Benefits of Christ," were destroyed almost to the last copy, so that, for a long time, they were considered as lost. The successor of Pope Paul III, Pope Julius III, who reigned from 1550 to 1555, led an idle and sensual life, and chiefly occupied himself in the arrangement and beautifying of a garden. The enemies of the Reformation were able to act with less control, and they left nothing undone which they thought could finally bring about the total annihilation of the Reformation.

In the year 1555, when Cardinal Giovanni

Caraffa, at the age of seventy-nine, ascended the Papal Chair as Pope Paul IV, affairs were conducted in a still worse manner than before. His great aim was to destroy the last trace of Protestantism, particularly in Italy, and to restore the Papacy to its former power and magnificence. He boasted that, during his entire reign, he allowed no day to pass without issuing some decree tending to the restoration of the Church to its former purity. At his command, whole heaps of Protestant books were burned. Neither private nor public libraries escaped such violence. The conducting of the Tribunal of the Inquisition, for whose foundation he had labored when cardinal, was his favorite occupation. He extended its authority, and imparted to it the right of using the rack for the discovery of accomplices, and even to interfere with the noblest and most distinguished people.

All endeavors to suppress the Protestant movement would have failed to have the

desired result if there had been men among the Italian princes such as the Elector of Saxony or the Landgrave Philip of Hesse. There were, however, no such noble men, for the small Italian princes had not the courage to differ with the Pope, on whom they were more or less dependent. There were also many lukewarm and indifferent Protestant Christians, who did not wish matters to come to a decided issue. They were those who received the new views in a general sense, but still did not accept the principles of the Reformation with decision and consistency. These people did not wish for a schism in the Church, and still less believed themselves called to a martyr's death. Many embraced the principles which a scholar, to whom we have been introduced at Ferrara, Celio Calcagnini, had expressed: "It was dangerous to give expression to such things before the multitude or in open conversation."

Besides, there were, among those who had

thrown off the fetters of the Papacy, some prominent and influential persons, who had been misled, by their acute understanding, to deny such doctrines as were then considered to be incontestable fundamental doctrines of Christianity; for instance, the Divinity of Christ. Even Bernardino Ochino, the two Lilies, and Faustus Socinius, whom we have mentioned before, the founder of the so-called Socinians, belonged to the opponents of the doctrine of the Trinity. It was then said, "When once the authority of the Church is denied, see how every thing is disarranged!"

How many hearts which had been inclined to the Reformation were again alienated! And the friends of Protestantism in Italy failed all the more to make a firm stand, because they had no common confession about which they could rally as around a common flag. The strifes concerning the Lord's-supper also provoked hostile divisions among them, especially in Venice; and all this contributed

toward facilitating the opposition of the Pope. Hundreds, we can say thousands, lost their freedom and life by this means; and a still greater number were obliged to forsake hearth and home and seek refuge in foreign lands, especially in Germany and Switzerland.

But there were not wanting instances of firm adherence to faith among the Reformers of Italy. Cardinal Morone, when Bishop of Modena, had sought, with great earnestness, to distribute the book of Paleario on "The Benefits of Christ." He was taxed with having embraced the doctrine of justification by faith, and with placing and maintaining his trust in the blood of Christ alone, which amounted to denying the worship of the saints. He was compelled to languish in prison, for such evangelical principles, until the death of Paul IV.

In Venice, Baldassare Altieri had been one of the most enthusiastic partisans of the Reformation. When the reaction began to gain

ground in that place, he hastened to Zurich, and to other towns of Switzerland, in order to obtain letters of introduction to the Council of his native city. He received them, but was deceived in his hope of their efficacy, being obliged to leave the Venetian territory. In Bergamo, he again met with his wife and children, and thought that he would find shelter and safety with Renata. She, however, could no longer stretch forth her protecting hand over her companions in faith, as she had done formerly. Altieri was obliged to go still farther. At Florence and other places he was also dismissed. At length he concealed himself in a little town in the territory of Brescia, but was still active for the cause of the Gospel. He returned again to Venice, for the purpose of taking away what little property he had there. In October, 1550, death released him from all future sufferings.

Pietro Carnesechi, of Florence, thought, when he was persecuted by the Inquisition,

that he would be able to live unmolested at the court of the friendly Duke Cosmo de Medici; but he was as unsuccessful as Altieri. The duke, on the receipt of a Papal letter, had him seized at his table and sent in chains to Rome. Here it was thought that he could be moved to recant; but he could not be induced to do so, either by threats or torture. He was therefore executed and burned.

In Calabria there were two communities of Waldenses, at Santa Visto and at La Guardia, who, by their diligence and moral conduct, had won the love and esteem of all around them, particularly of their landlords. How they were treated in the year 1560, an eyewitness, and even a Catholic, reported as follows: "Having communicated to you, from time to time, what has happened here on occasions of heresy, I have now to tell you what fearful judgments have been visited on the Lutherans in our neighborhood. To tell the truth, I can only compare it to the

slaughtering of sheep. They were all cooped up in a house, as in a sheep-fold. The executioner brought them out, one after another, led them to an open place, bade them kneel down, and then severed their heads from their bodies. In this manner eighty-eight were murdered. I can scarcely refrain from tears as I write this. No man who had looked on the execution of one could be present at that of a second. To-day another command has appeared, according to which one hundred and sixty grown persons are to be executed. The number of heretics imprisoned in Calabria are six hundred. I did not know that they had behaved themselves improperly; for they are a simple and well-instructed people; who occupy themselves altogether with the spade and the plow."

In other places, the most inhuman cruelties were inflicted on the unfortunate ones. A certain Bernardino Conte, of Cosenza, was smeared with pitch, and then burned before

the eyes of the people. Another, named Morzone, was stripped of his clothing, scourged with rods, and then beaten to death with burning torches. One of his sons, who had resisted all attempts to make him recant, was led up to a high tower, and commanded to embrace a crucifix if he did not wish to be cast down. He refused, and the threat was carried out. After indescribable dangers and sufferings, were some enabled to escape to foreign lands. How Renata's heart must have bled to hear of such cruelties, and yet to be unable to prevent them! She could only assist a few fugitives in escaping from their persecutors.

Her position had become a lamentable one, and these changes for the worse had commenced with the departure of Calvin. Renata was soon after obliged to send away her secretary, Clement Marot, who had pleased her very much on account of his beautiful handwriting. Another Frenchman, Lion Jamez,

who seemed less suspicious, took his place. But this man, as well as the remaining French, were obliged to yield, partly on political and partly on religious grounds. Hercules had separated himself from the French party, and would therefore no longer endure any of these people in his court. It was not known to him that the countrymen of his wife were firm adherents to the Protestant doctrines, and for that reason Renata was confirmed in her regard for them. The much tried wife found it the hardest to part with her old governess, Madame de Soubise, and to find herself surrounded by servants in whom she had no confidence.

In the year 1539, she expressed the wish to her brother-in-law, through the Constable de Montmorency, that he would intercede for her, so that she might receive better treatment; but this appeal was seemingly unnoticed. Matters continued in this way for some time, until religious persecution commenced in a more

extended manner in Ferrara. The few days which the Pope spent in Belvidere and Ferrara contributed, apparently, to stimulate the fanaticism of the duke, and to procure full validity for the Papal decrees. Nor did other persons fail to represent to the duke what a disgrace heresy was to the house of Este, which had so long been famous for its adherence to the Papal Chair, and what a dangerous example the mother was setting before her children and the whole court ; how the respect of the house was lost among other Catholic powers ; and how effectually the Pope could manifest his displeasure.

In 1545, the Inquisition was commenced in Ferrara. The Pope directed an earnest and urgent letter to the inhabitants of the city, in which he charged them, under heavy penalties, to watch all persons in the most critical manner, no matter what their rank or station, whose religious sentiments were suspected, and to examine whether any such reasons

were founded on truth. They should not hesitate to use torture until every thing was discovered. They should then send their reports to Rome, that judgment might be pronounced. Spies went about Ferrara, as well as over the whole of Italy, insinuating themselves, under cover of love and friendship, into the favor of those who were suspected, and enticing them into expressions which could be used against them as reasons for persecution. As the duke was anxious to clear himself from the suspicion that he was in sympathy with his wife, and, like her, afforded protection to Protestants, the prisons were filled.

Whoever wished to save himself, hastened away. Others were driven away by official command; but many were obliged to suffer martyrdom; so that, after a short time, the city and its neighborhood were, in the main, purified from heresy. No matter what merit any one had acquired in earlier days in the

ducal family, it did not protect him if he were now suspected of Protestantism. The brothers Sinapi, too, were obliged to leave the city, although, as the former teachers of the princes and princess, the duke should have shown them more leniency. Among those who sealed their love of the Gospel with death, was Fànio Faventino, who belonged to Faenza, in the Papal states. When he became convinced of the truth of the Protestant doctrines by reading the Scriptures, he felt compelled to enlighten others, in order to lead them back from their heterodoxy. He was cast into prison, and compelled to recant.

When by this weakness he had again received his liberty, he was all the more zealous in the confession of his faith, in order to make amends for his past offense. He preached from place to place in the Romagna. The consequence was, that he was again seized and placed in safe-keeping. This time he was steadfast. His wife and sister visited him in

prison, and besought him, for their sakes, again to recant. He answered: "It ought to be enough for you that I have once denied my Savior for your sake. Had I then known what I have experienced by my fall, through the grace of God I should not have yielded to your wish. Go home in peace!" Even in his imprisonment he took measures to strengthen others in their faith.

Olympia Morata and the Princess Lavinia visited him in prison, in order to profit from his conversation and his example. The influence of his piety and of his impressive words was lasting on his fellow-prisoners, so that those who were afterward set free openly acknowledged that they had not known what freedom and happiness were until, through Fannio, they found it within the walls of the prison. He was, therefore, placed in solitary confinement. Here he wrote Christian essays for the instruction and edification of his friends. So much was the influence of his

conversation on those who came in contact with him feared, that his jailors were frequently changed. It was some time during the year 1550 that he was first strangled, and then burned, on account of his being a dangerous heretic.

Renata was obliged to witness all these outbreaks of fanaticism quietly, and be consoled with the thought that she was still left unmolested. She was, however, constantly restrained more and more. Her husband was afraid to put her, the daughter of a king of France, under greater restraint than that of isolation and restriction.

Almost forsaken in her princely apartments, she was obliged to close her troubled heart, and could only seek comfort and tranquillity among the few faithful ones left her. Among these was the daughter of Madame de Soubise and Madame de Pons. She read willingly and frequently in the Scriptures, and could truly say, "Unless thy law had been

my delight, I should then have perished in mine affliction."

Even the marriage of her daughter Anna was, in many respects, an event of little pleasure to her. It was thought that this was her favorite daughter, and was best qualified to give her mother comfort and advice. Anna was joined in matrimony, in 1548, to Duke Francis of Lorraine, who, under the name of Francis de Guise, had acquired an unfortunate celebrity as the principal persecutor of the Protestants in France. From history we can not learn whether Renata was perfectly satisfied with this union or not. If she were not at first, she must have been brought to consent to it in the hope that some amelioration of the oppression which the Protestants suffered might be the result; for it was the universal opinion that Anna was inclined to the Reformation. But whether this was so or not, she could neither promote nor hinder the marriage, as she had lost all influence with

the duke. One thing was very evident, however, that her sad condition was increased by the pain of separation.

It can be said, with truth, that all who had been associated with Anna in any way were thrown into deep grief by her departure. She was universally beloved because of her virtues, but especially because of her affability and sweet disposition.

Soon after the marriage, Olympia Morata, the faithful friend of Anna, was obliged to leave the court. Even before the departure of the princess, she had been called to the sick-bed of her father, and by her care of him had given proof that she had neither forgotten, in the midst of her scientific occupations, how to attend to domestic matters, or to cherish the most ardent filial affection. Yet all her devoted and self-sacrificing care was not able to save the life of her father. He died in the faith in which he had lived, full of joyous peace.

Olympia did not return again to her former position. She had lost her former favor with the duke by means of a Carmelite monk, Hieronymus Bolsec, from Paris. He had gone to Ferrara, in order to find a place of refuge. Renata received him with good-will, as one of her banished people, and appointed him her almoner. In doing so, she placed a viper in her house. Bolsec sought, above all, to destroy Olympia's influence, apparently because of her Protestant opinions. He caused her to be suspected by the duchess, and still more by the duke. Olympia was resolved to defend herself from the accusations brought against her; she stood alone before her enemies and foes. Her friend Anna had already been absent from the city for some time, and could no longer say a word in her defense. The duchess was silent—we believe less because she had any mistrust than because she dared not venture any step in opposition to the duke.

Olympia remained as one banished by her family. She thus expresses her pain in a letter written afterward: "After the death of my father, I stood alone, betrayed and forsaken by those who should have supported me. I was exposed to the most unjust maltreatment in return for my faithfulness and affection; but my sisters took my part. You may think how great was my pain, when of all those who called themselves our friends, none ventured to show us any sympathy. It was almost as we had been thrust into the lower regions, from which there was no escape."

Renata's silence and inattention in the matter had given others cause for suspicion. We can not think that, in this case, she proved herself untrue, and had forgotten how near Olympia, a short time before, had stood to her and her daughter. The character of this noble princess, which afterward showed its better features, contradicts this supposition. Her firm courage and steadfast resolution seemed,

indeed, to fail her; but her loving heart remained with her until the latest moment of her life.

In August, 1554, Calvin wrote a letter to the duchess, which shows us in what disquiet he lived in relation to her constancy. He sent her a curate, Francis de Morel, Lord of Colanges, and expressed his regret that he was so restrained that he could not come himself to comfort and strengthen her. He said, further, that he should consider that he had deeply sinned if he did not support her in this time of need. Colanges proved to be the right man for her. He was a nobleman of an illustrious house, but without pride or vanity, humble and modest, as the children of God should always be. This man had long had an earnest desire to serve her in the Lord and to participate in her sorrows. She bade him welcome as a messenger of God, and she learned later that God had certainly sent him for her salvation.

Calvin, at the same time, informed the duchess that an honorable Christian woman was ready to enter her service, in order to have control over her other attendants. She was not of a great name, and for that reason would be less likely to be an object of suspicion. Her previous conduct had been of such a character that the home of Renata could not fail in being blessed by her services.

Renata was in need, at this time, of constant support, for the trials to which she was subjected threatened to be too heavy for her. Until now she had resisted all demands for her participation in the mass or in the Catholic confession ; but it was a question whether she could withstand successfully the renewed contest.

Her nephew, Henry II of France, determined to give his assistance toward the conversion of his aunt. He, therefore, sent the Inquisitor Du Oris, with an autographic letter to the Duchess of Ferrara, in which he

expressed his pain that his dear relative had become involved in such a labyrinth of unholy errors. She should, while there was yet time, think of the salvation of her soul, and return penitently to the bosom of the Church. Du Oris had such peculiar written instructions in his pocket that we can not forbear giving them. "He shall first," it is written, "instruct himself precisely as to what degree of heresy the duchess has reached. Then he shall demand a conference with her, and express to her the great pain which His Most Christian Majesty, the King of France, felt on hearing the news that his beloved aunt had fallen into the participation of damnable and godless errors. If she can not be turned from her heresy by gentle means, by friendly remonstrances, it shall be brought about, with the help of the duke, by force. Du Oris shall preach to her, especially concerning those parts of the Bible by which she has allowed herself to be misled. She must be

compelled to be present, together with her household, at these discourses, no matter what her objections may be. If, however, these proceedings are without success, then he shall beseech the duke in the name of His Majesty, to isolate her from all society and intercourse with mankind, in order that she can not affect others with her sentiments. Above all, her children should be taken away from her, and none of her people who have been suspected of heresy allowed to go near her. Lastly, he should bring the latter to trial, and punish those who were found guilty. The punishment of the duchess herself should be left to her husband, in order that it might be regulated, as far as justice would allow, without public outrage to herself or her relatives."

The inquisitor found greater resistance than he had expected. The sorely tried Renata resisted all the demands of her countryman's fanatical persuasions. She was, there-

fore, formally declared to be a heretic. They brought upon her maternal heart the indescribable pain of seeing all her children removed from her. She, at the command of her husband, who was authorized by the King of France to act thus, was conveyed, on the 7th of September, 1554, to the old Castle of Este, by Bishop Rosetti and the Chevalier Ruggieri, where she was held in close custody. Only two waiting-women and her steward were allowed admittance to her. Her daughters Leonore and Lucretia were placed in a convent. The duke made the most bitter complaints concerning her conduct, declaring that she had ruined herself and the whole family. Her position was wretched, as there was no one near to comfort or advise with her. She did not feel strong enough to persevere, solitary and forsaken, in the contest which she had to sustain, especially as those around her were continually pointing out to her that, by a little submission, she could

return to the bosom of her family. She thought much of the instructress of her youth, Marguerite of Valois, whom she so highly honored, and how she had submitted to the outward ordinances of the Catholic Church. She yielded, and Father Palletario came to her, on the 23d of September, for the purpose of receiving her confession, and to administer to her the Lord's-supper in the Catholic form. She repeated both on the 1st of November, and received, in consequence, permission to return to the ducal palace. Universal exultation prevailed among the Catholics in consequence of this victory. If such a gifted and virtuous woman, in high position, submitted to the persecutions carried on against her, how could it fail to have the further success of almost fully suppressing Protestantism? The news of Renata's fall depressed the Protestant Christians far and near. Whom, however, did the news affect the most?

In February, 1555—we may think how long it then took news to spread—Calvin, the true curate, wrote to the duchess: “Worthy lady,—As, since the time when it pleased God to try your faith, I have not received any news from you except through general rumor, I do not know what I ought to write to you. I could not, however, let the opportunity which the bearer offered me go unimproved. You have deviated from the true path for the sake of the world. The enemy triumphed. We must sigh and droop our heads. Moreover, worthy lady, since our God is ever ready to take us into favor, and to extend his hand toward us when we have fallen, in order that the fall may not prove our death, I pray you to take new courage; and, if the enemy has for a moment profited by your weakness, and thus won some advantage over you, do not let him gain the eternal victory; but let him feel that those whom God hath comforted are doubly strengthened by him, so they are enabled to

sustain every contest. If you will consider that God, while he humbles his own, will not forever confound them, this will instill hope into your heart, so that your courage will be increased. I well know that the same storms which have caused you to fall are still continually prepared for you. I pray you, therefore, to think how much you are indebted to Him who has bought you so dearly, and who invites you daily to the heavenly inheritance. He is not a master in whose service we conceal any thing, particularly when we consider the end of all for which we endure sorrow and shame in his service. . . . Worthy lady, I pray you, in the name of God, not only to surrender your person as a witness of the Gospel, but recommend you and your sympathizers in your household to silence all calumniators in that way."

The exhortations of Calvin do not appear to have been in vain, although they did not produce the resoluteness which he had wished.

In his next letter, on the 10th of June, 1555, he says:

“Worthy lady,—Right well could I have wished to receive better news from you; that is, that you had acquired true peace of mind through the service of God. Nevertheless, I am much rejoiced to know that you do not cease to cry to God, and that you are endeavoring to fulfill your sacred duty. That is the way in which we must fight in order to imitate the Son of God. It is indeed true that we have not all to sustain a like battle; yet Satan will never allow us to serve God without temptations. You experience this more than many others; but God has his reasons for placing these afflictions upon you. The position in which you find yourself is a trial of your faith, in order that you may experience the more what a precious treasure the Gospel is. Preserve, now, the same courage for the future, and, no matter how long your trials may endure, expect a good result from

your labors ; for it is certain that God will at last hear your sighs and prayers ; and he will offer you his hand if you do not become weary in the attempt. Be troubled only because it is not permitted you to use all that you possess to the glorifying of his name. Such anxiety as yours is a hundred times more desirable than the quiet hours which those have who are contented with mere charity in his service without any thing farther.

“You must not be satisfied simply with striving. You must, rather, have regard for every favorable opportunity which God gives you, with the strictest attention, in order to make continual progress. Do not be weary of bringing into use, day by day, every means which can indicate to you the right way. No matter how far you are yet from the goal, it will not be in vain that you strive after it. The result of our course is sure, if we continually follow the appointed path. This, indeed, must give us strength to overcome all tempta-

tions. If the children of the world venture on undertakings in a hope which too often deceives them, how different should it be with us, when we have the promise of God that we can be certain of our salvation! I do not write this to lull you into a feeling of security, but that you may ever be sorrowful concerning the oppressive slavery into which you are brought; for a sense of our bondage is one means by which we can become freed from it. On the other hand, he who is pleased with his evil doings, closes the door against God, who withdraws his mercy. Worthy lady, I will, for my part, ever pray to God to take you under his protection, ever increase your knowledge, and strengthen your zeal to serve him for evermore."

After the duchess was restored to liberty, she lived quite aloof from the court. She was obliged to look on quietly and see the many persecutions to which her attendants were exposed. It was not possible for her to take

any successful step in their favor, to afford them any essential help. She came very little in contact with her husband or her children; and if a stranger wished to visit her, it was only with hesitation that the request was permitted to her or the princesses. From time to time she received a consolatory or admonitory letter from Calvin, who always subscribed himself with the pseudonym, Charles d'Espeville. In almost every line of his letters he expressed his anxiety that the duchess was not strong enough to remain faithful to the Protestant doctrines in the midst of the severe trials which she had to sustain. Calvin found, however, no further reason to reproach Renata for her fickleness or for withdrawing her attachment from the Reformation.

On this point, a letter of the 20th of June, 1558, is worthy of notice. We read in it:

“Worthy lady,—I feel compelled to thank the Lord that the man whom I sent you for your service has acquitted himself nobly, and

that you are satisfied with him. I hope that his labors will contribute toward conducting you farther on the way of salvation. Since, however, it is not possible for him to stand any longer by your side, I pray you most earnestly to let yourself be instructed daily in the school of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know that this is necessary, especially since the devil has brought upon you so many sorrows, and has tried to lead you away from the right path. Since you must resist all the wiles which this enemy of salvation places in your path, you must, at the same time, remember that God has used these means in order to try your faith. If you have doubting moments, take refuge in Him who has promised that all who trust in him shall be as a tree which has living roots, which are never dry, no matter what heat it may have to endure; for it is certain that God will never suffer us to be tempted beyond our strength; and if he allows Satan to have dominion for a time, he will also

increase our strength that we may be enabled to overcome all difficulties. It is good and even useful to know our weaknesses ; not to become careless on account of them, however, but in order to seek more diligently the right means of salvation.

“ Therefore, worthy lady, while you believe that the enemy, notwithstanding all his endeavors, can do nothing without God’s permission, do not become weary of fighting against all temptations ; and when weapons are necessary to you, take refuge in the Lord, who is strong enough to strengthen you. Exercise yourself in godly admonitions, and, as I have already said, do not despise the necessity of having about you a person who daily encourages you to good deeds. You have already experienced how necessary this means of grace has become.

“ If you commission me to seek you some one who would be suitable, I would do my best to fulfill your wish. Only take courage,

and do not give Satan the advantage of taking you unprepared.

“I have also heard that you are not without thorns in your house. This misfortune must be subdued with the others; and however much danger there is that those who will not accommodate themselves to your regulations, but remain stubborn, will revenge themselves by calumny and suspicion when they are discharged, still, it is better to undergo this danger at one blow than to languish continually under it. The principal thing is for you to ask God to purify your heart, as he commands, and as you find the example of David in the one hundred and first Psalm. If you present your soul pure and adorned before so good a King, you may be assured that he will be the protector of it. It matters not how much we exert ourselves, we shall always have imperfections, and for that reason it becomes you all the more to be strong, in order to come at least half-way to the end. And we have this

privilege: if we strive to reach the end, God accepts the will for the deed."

Other cares pressed on the heart of the much tried sufferer. The money which was due her from France did not arrive regularly, or was sometimes intentionally withheld. In the year 1557, Renata thanked the Constable de Montmorency for having received, through him, her annuity for two years. From another letter, to her attorney at Paris, in the year 1558, we perceive that she claimed, in part, the annuities of four years. In the mean time she may have been subject to embarrassment and want.

A perfect reconciliation with her husband never took place; but we need not be surprised at this state of things, since the manner of the duke's life was ill calculated to win back the affection of his wife. He presented, however, the beautiful Castle of Belriguardo to her, a year before his death, on the condition that she should live and die a good Catholic.

She refused with scorn this reward of Judas, as her later life proves.

Another sorrow constantly gnawed at her heart. Her eldest son, Alphonso, had, for several years, been on bad terms with his father. In May, 1551, he left his father's castle, and even Italy, and went to France. The supposed cause of their trouble was, that Alphonso could not agree with his father in breaking off friendly relations with the French and joining the opposite party. In 1557, the Duke of Guise came to Italy with an army, for the purpose of compelling Ferrara to join the alliance between France and the Pope. Alphonso then returned home, and an apparent reconciliation took place between the father and the son. Their hearts' remained estranged, however, and Alphonso went once more to France.

The duke was now approaching his end. His constitution, once so strong, had become weakened in consequence of his excesses.

Renata forgot the past, as far as it were possible, and affectionately watched by the bedside of her husband. Here, however, her weak and yielding heart once more partly led her astray, which afterward wrung from her many a tear of penitence. Her husband endeavored to draw from her the promise that she would break off all immediate relations, and, therefore, all correspondence, with Calvin. She did not think at the moment of the full extent of this promise, and actually consented to it. The duke died on the 3d of October, 1559, and Renata assumed the government of affairs in the name of her absent son. Was the sky now to be clear for the rest of her life? Had the storm passed away, and the black clouds utterly vanished? Perhaps Renata thought so. But a calm consideration of her circumstances and a glance at the state of Italy shortly deprived her of this gleam of sunshine. She considered it best to go to France the following year, and there reside.

Calvin was not acquainted with this intention. He wrote to her on the 5th of July, 1560. In the introduction of his letter he complained that he had received no reliable news from her, and that he was not willing to rely fully upon the information which he received from messengers, fearing their object might be to deceive him, in order to entrap him into expressions which would prove disadvantageous to her. He then continued:

“You have done a great wrong, and offended God by your promise. You are, therefore, not bound to hold it, no more than you are bound to hold the vow of superstition. You know that Herod has acquired no praise because he fulfilled his too hasty oath, but that this will be accounted to him as double condemnation. I do not say this in order to compel you to write to me, but in order that you may have no conscientious scruples about a matter in which God has allowed you freedom. As to the thing itself which you wish

to undertake, I can not conceal from you, no matter how severe and oppressive the imprisonment in which you have been held, that it does not appear to me any great advantage if one flee from one pit to fall into another, for I do not see how this change could improve your position. The Government into which certain persons would like to see you drawn, is at the present time in such a state of confusion that all the world rises against it. I believe if you were allowed to take a real part in it, and people would listen to you, matters would take a better course. But that is not what they have in view. . . . They only make use of your name in order to increase the misery which is already intolerable ; and if you cast yourself at this time into this net, you will certainly be tempting God.

“ I wish you much happiness, worthy lady—as much as it is possible for me to wish you ; but if the grandeur and elevation of this world prevent you from drawing near to

God, I should be a deceiver if I tried to make you believe that white were black. If you were more firm in holding yourself independent, and were of a still greater steadfastness of mind, I would pray to God that he would place you higher than men are disposed to place you. But if you will say 'Amen' to all that is worthy of Divine and human condemnation, you might well fear lest you fall from one misfortune into a deeper one. I will not advise you to remain in the bondage in which you now are, or that you slumber in it.

"The reason for my appeal is, that you might place yourself in a position where you can serve God with a full consciousness of his cause, and go straight to the end, and not become entangled in nets from which you would hardly be able to free yourself. Whatever the result be, you have now languished at least long enough, and if you do not soon have compassion on yourself, it is to be feared

that it will be too late for you to seek a means of salvation. God has for a long time instructed you by his Word, and age now reminds you to consider that our inheritance and eternal rest are not to be found on earth, and that Jesus Christ is well worthy of our forgetting both France and Ferrara for his sake. Widowhood has now given you freedom to devote yourself entirely to the Lord. O, that I could only place before you the matter as it really stands, and not only once, but day by day. But I must leave you to meditate wisely on the matters concerning which I have written."

Renata would not allow herself to be turned aside from carrying out her plans. All Ferrara mourned her departure; especially the poor knew what they lost in a princess, who, even in sorrow, did not weary of doing as much good as she could.

Before we accompany her to France, it is necessary for us to answer a question which

many readers may have asked themselves: What has become of Olympia Morata? Her removal from the ducal court produced a total change in her life, and one that was any thing but pleasant. She was reduced from affluence and superfluity to moderate circumstances—we may say, to actual want. A delicate mother, three sisters not yet of age, and a little brother, claimed her affectionate labors. This tender maiden, who had formerly devoted herself almost entirely to study, and had been waited on by courtiers, managed her household affairs, like the busy Martha, as if she had been accustomed to it from her youth. Besides this, she educated her sisters and brother carefully in the Protestant doctrines.

This change had a beneficial effect on the salvation of her soul. Formerly, in her zeal for scientific studies, she had lost sight of the one thing needful. In regard to this subject, she expressed herself in the following manner: “O, how much I needed trial! I had no taste

for godly things. The perusal of the Old and New Testaments only imbued me with repugnance. If I had remained longer at court, it would have been the ruin of my eternal salvation." She was almost totally alienated from the ducal family. She remained on intimate terms only with the Princess Lavinia de Rovero, who was married to Paolo Orsino. These friends continued a correspondence until the close of their life.

Olympia found still another friend in need. This was a German, Andreas Grunthler, of Schweinfurt-on-the-Main. He was well versed in classical literature, and had acquired a no less extended knowledge of medicine. He had become acquainted with the Morata family through the brothers Sinapi. How could he see Olympia, who was one of the most beautiful of her sex, to say nothing of her mental charms, without loving her? The misfortunes which had befallen the family was a still stronger magnet, whose attractive power he

could not withstand. The marriage of Andreas Grunthler with Olympia was celebrated in December of the year 1550. The future, however, of the newly wedded couple was enveloped in lowering clouds. Grunthler hoped to get a position as Professor of Medicine in Germany. He, therefore, returned to his native town, but could not send pleasing intelligence of certain employment as soon as he wished. Olympia became melancholy, and thus expressed herself in a letter to him: "I pass my days in tears, and nowhere find any alleviation of my pain, except in constant prayer to Him from whom alone all help comes." Grunthler had met with an honorable reception in Germany, especially in Augsburg, and had received favorable promises for the future. The state of politics, however, which was then so disturbed and threatened only danger, prevented his appointment. Nevertheless, he brought his wife from Italy; and for a long time they lived as welcome guests at Augs-

burg, in the house of the wealthy Fugger family, and, later, in that of the Imperial Counselor Hermann. After some time, Grunthler's services as physician were required in his native city; for it was to receive a large garrison. In October, 1551, he removed thither, and for some time his stay was happy and full of promise.

He found there persons of similar opinions to his own, who formed a close friendship with his family, and who often convened for the purpose of reading the Scriptures and various religious works; but there appeared a still better prospect for the family of Grunthler when he was called to a professorship in the University of Linz. He did not accept it, however, for the reason that he and his wife were not assured that they would be free to hold their Protestant opinions. Olympia continually occupied herself more and more with the Holy Scriptures, and, among her other employments, made excellent Greek translations of many of the Psalms.

In April, 1553, a fearful time began for Schweinfurt and its inhabitants. The town was besieged by Albrecht of Brandenburg, and finally captured. Famine and pestilence had raged within the town during the siege. Grunthler was occupied from morning until night, until he was seized with sickness himself. By the devoted care of his wife, he recovered without the aid of a physician. After the capitulation, Albrecht perpetrated the most inhuman barbarities. An unknown person offered to help Grunthler and his wife to escape. At first they were recaptured; but Olympia spoke in such persuasive terms to the soldiers that they were set at liberty.

It was only after the most severe hardships and privations that the fugitives arrived at Hammelburg; and here they could only find shelter for one night, for the inhabitants were in such great fear of the conqueror. In another place they were imprisoned, and the sword of Damocles hung over their heads.

Fortunately, the command of the bishop soon procured their liberty. They wandered farther, as beggars, until the Lord took compassion on them; and, at the court of Count Eberhard of Erbach, He pointed them a place where they could lay their heads.

They lost much property; but the most important of all was the magnificent library of her father, which Olympia, at much expense, had been influential in bringing with her to Germany. Neither was there any hope that the manuscripts of Olympia could ever be restored. The delicate woman was attacked with a severe illness, in consequence of these losses and her many sufferings. The Countess of Erbach, a daughter of the Elector of the Palatinate, assumed the full care of the patient. The Protestant faith of the two unfortunate ones found sympathy and support in the court of the count. Every day the count assembled the members of his family and his domestics, and read to them from the Bible

and prayed with them. Grunthler, through the influence of the count, was called to Heidelberg University as professor. Although they were still poor themselves, Olympia thought of their companions in misfortune at Schweinfurt, and exerted herself in procuring support for them.

Her mind was also directed sympathetically toward Italy. She begged of her countryman, the former Bishop Vergerio, to translate Luther's Catechism into Italian, and to distribute it as widely as possible. She was not willing, notwithstanding all persecution, to give up the hope that the Gospel would yet take root in her native land; but the news which she continually heard from there almost discouraged her. About this time she wrote as follows to an acquaintance: "The letters which I have recently received from Italy inform me, unfortunately, that the Christians of Ferrara have been subjected to the most cruel persecution. The nobility and peasantry are

martyred alike. Some are thrown into prison, and others are driven from the country, while the remainder find safety only in flight. My mother remains firm in the midst of the raging storm. Still I can praise God, and say, 'To Him alone be the glory!' I beseech you to leave that Babel, with my sisters, and come to me in this country."

The vacillation of Renata affected her very much. She thus expressed herself concerning it, in a letter to Vergerio: "The intelligence which you have given me in regard to the Duchess of Ferrara had reached me already, in the month of December, by a letter from a pious person of the town. I was much grieved at the fall of the princess, whom I knew in former times; but it did not astonish me."

Olympia's house in Heidelberg was sought by native and foreign scholars. Through the liberality of certain book-sellers, she again acquired a considerable library. She thus expressed her state of mind in her last letter to

Lavinia: "Believe me," she wrote, "there is no one in the world who is not exposed to all manner of suffering, if he tries to live a godly life in this world; but we can not escape the snares which Satan has laid for us on all sides. May the Word of God, therefore, be the rule of your conduct and a light to your path! Fear God, and do not place a high estimate on this mortal nature, whose existence is like a dream, like grass that withers and a smoke that passes away! War is spreading its horrors here, and Christians are exposed to a thousand tribulations; but trials must bring to them the fullness of their joy."

Olympia did not conceal the fact that death was near her; and it grieves us to know that the evening of her short life was not to be without its sorrows. In the Summer of 1555, the plague raged in Heidelberg. Grunthler could not, on account of his duties as a physician, devote the care to his sick wife which she really needed. She manifested a truly

Christian spirit until her last breath. She wrote once more to Curione: "My powers are exhausted. I do not enjoy food any more. I am in danger of being suffocated by a cough day and night; but, until my last sigh, I will think of all those whom I have loved. Do not be sorrowful at the news of my death. I know that the crown of righteousness is preserved for me, and I long to depart and be with Christ."

The longing was terminated. Olympia died on the 26th of October, 1555, before she had attained her twenty-ninth year. Her husband said, after her death: "Never have I known a truer and purer soul! No, never did so much greatness of a human soul, so much purity and grace beam upon this earth!"





VI.

RENATA'S RETURN TO FRANCE—HER HAPPY DEATH.

RENATA had hoped, after the death of her husband, to be able to profess her faith more freely. But her son declared to her, after he had had a conference with the Pope, that she must either renounce her faith or leave his country. She did not hesitate long in making the choice; and, painful as it was for her to separate from her children, she left Ferrara in September, 1560, after she had lived there twenty-two years, through sunshine and gloom. Her departure was deplored by all the inhabitants, and especially by the poor, by whom she was held

in grateful remembrance. The mother tore herself from the arms of her daughters, weeping profusely. She may also have uttered words of admonition to them ; but, in regard to religion, she only dared express herself with the greatest caution. What rendered her departure the most heart-rending, was the thought that she was banished by her own son ; and yet she could not forget him who had always been so near her heart. Where should the banished Renata go ?

We know that she wished once more to visit her beloved native land ; and she was not dissuaded from carrying out her purpose by the well-meant warning of her pastoral advisor. Had, perhaps, the state of things in France changed, so that the reasons for which Calvin advised her against going there were now void ? Were Protestants now allowed to live there undisturbed ? Or dared Renata calculate that, through her influence, her companions in faith would gain the desired free-

dom of conscience and religion? Was at least her daughter Anne pervaded by such a spirit that she could seek her with perfect confidence? Dared she promise herself a specially favorable reception at the royal court? She found the latter alone to be the case. All the members of the royal family extended to her a friendly hand, and showed her all the respect that was due her elevated station. They proved, whenever an opportunity offered, that they wished to respect and treat her as their near relative. Renata received the administration of the Government of Chartres and other territories; and since many persons sought to place obstacles in her way, King Charles IX determined to remove them.

In regard to the religious movements in France, however, scarcely any change for the better had occurred. The persecution of the Protestants had continued almost without interruption since the death of Francis I, in 1547. His son and successor, Henry II,

showed, on his solemn entrance into Paris, what the friends of ecclesiastical reform had to expect from him. He wished to afford for himself and his followers, besides other festivities, the spectacle of a burning of heretics. He, therefore, took a number of persons out of the prisons, and commanded that they should be distributed into different parts of the city, and there burned to death. The king passed by, and heard the sighs and groans of the martyrs, but without being moved to compassion.

In the notorious edict of Chateaubriand, of 1551, the most severe measures were commanded to be taken against the heretics. Whoever fled from France in order to escape these oppressions, had his property confiscated, and no one dared, on pain of severe punishment, send money or letters to the fugitives. But, notwithstanding this oppression and persecution, the doctrines of the Reformation continually spread more and more.

There were, in the entire kingdom, about eleven hundred smaller or larger societies, with about one million and a half members. They maintained the most scrupulous purity of morals. They declared themselves the enemies of the luxuries, excesses, and follies of the world. They permitted no dancing at their entertainments, and, instead of immoral songs, they were heard singing psalms.

Whoever did not become better after receiving admonition and correction, was dismissed from the society. These Reformers, however, notwithstanding their praiseworthy qualities, could obtain neither recognition nor toleration. Almost every year new and stricter measures were employed against them. When the French lost the battle of St. Quentin, against the Spaniards, in 1557, it was said, "We have not been zealous enough for the honor of God; therefore he has avenged himself by this defeat."

In September, 1557, the Protestants of

Paris, numbering from three to four hundred, were convened together in a house which stood by itself in the Rue de Jacque. They were there assailed by a furious mob, which had been instigated by a fanatic, and were treated in the most cruel manner. No investigation or punishment of the guilty parties followed; on the contrary, no judge dared to venture, if Protestants were indicted, to declare himself for liberation, or even for a mild sentence; if he did, he was in danger of being placed on the culprit's bench himself. In the year 1559, the Parliamentary Counselor Du Bourg was beheaded, for no other reason than because he had disapproved of the condemnation of the Protestant Christians.

Henry II died in 1559, in consequence of a lance-wound received in a tournament. The affairs of Government remained very much the same after his death as before. During the reign of his successor, Francis II, who was yet a minor, the Guises, those irreconcil-

able enemies of the Gospel, were able to obtain the most important offices of the State, and to make sure their influence in the government of the country. Two of six brothers who bore this name deserve special mention—Cardinal Charles de Lorraine, Archbishop of Rheims, and Francis de Guise, son-in-law of Renata. It has been said, and not without reason, had it not been for these two brothers, the Protestant doctrines would have gained the victory in France.

At their instigation there was a “burning-chamber” instituted in all higher courts of justice. This was a special department, whose task it was to condemn heretics without compassion. Every conceivable method was employed to influence the hatred of the people against the Protestants. We still meet with pictures of that time, in which the Protestants are represented as armed, murdering priests, women, children, and old men. Just such pictures were hung up in public places, and

explained to the gaping mob. Here and there images of the Virgin were set up, in order that the Catholic oppressors might have an opportunity of seeing who paid homage to them and who did not. Woe to those who passed by without uncovering the head and putting a coin in the box for the purchase of wax candles! He was immediately exposed to the ill-treatment of the mob.

The Guises, who were regarded as the chief promoters of fanaticism, became more and more odious to the Reformers. A conspiracy was formed for their overthrow, which took its name from Amboise. When the design was discovered, the cardinal proceeded with the utmost severity against his enemies, so that twelve hundred persons lost their lives. But many eminent and influential persons were on the side of the Protestants. Among them were the two brother Coligny, or Chatillon; namely, Admiral Gaspard Coligny, a man of the noblest principles and tested valor, and

his brother Francis, commonly called Monsieur d'Andelot, but by the soldiers, "the knight without fear or reproach." He was the means of having the Gospel preached in his neighborhood with still more publicity than his brother; and when the king once took him to task because of his Protestant opinions, he replied: "Leave my conscience in peace; that belongs to me. My body and my talents are devoted to you and your service."

What was of still greater importance to the Protestants, was that the Bourbon brothers stood on their side. Anton, the elder of the two, had married Jeanne d'Albret, the daughter of Marguerite de Valois, and by this marriage became King of Navarre. His character was of a hesitating nature. For a long time, he remained in doubt between the Protestant and Catholic doctrines. He was, however, for a short time, through the influence of his wife, won over to the former; but, later, he again

submitted to Catholic proselytism. His wife was more steadfast than he, as is proved circumstantially in the account of her life.

Anton's brother, Louis de Condé, had a more vigorous spirit and a more manly character, and was of all the more importance to the Protestant party on account of the attachment of the soldiers to him. The Guises were only too glad to put him out of the way. They accused him of being the chief instigator of the Amboise conspiracy, and succeeded in having him imprisoned.

We see, therefore, that Renata went right into the midst of the conflict when she proceeded to France. She could not expect any decided and courageous support of the Protestants from her daughter. From early childhood she had imbibed, more than any of her sisters or brothers, Protestant doctrines, and she was looked upon in France as a woman of Reformed opinions. It is very easy for us to see, from the peculiarities of her position,

that she could exercise no influence over her husband in favor of her companions in faith. It seems strange that she had ceased all connection with Olympia Morata, the friend of her youth. When Olympia heard of the oppression to which the Protestant Christians were subjected in France, she wrote the following letter to her, dated June 1, 1555:

“Illustrious Princess! Although the distance is great which has separated us for so many years, the remembrance of you is ever present to my mind. I have often thought of writing to you, but for various reasons I have not ventured to do so, until the opportunity of to-day offered itself. When a learned and God-fearing man came to Heidelberg to visit us, there was nothing that I was so anxious to do as to ask for information concerning you. He promised, if it were possible, to have this letter delivered into your hands, and I did not hesitate to trust it to him, in the hope that you might read it with

pleasure, because it came from one who was formerly the companion of your studies. You know with what sweet confidence we lived together in those years; and, although you were my social superior, we were united by literary labors and affinity of tastes and sentiments. The remembrance of all this will not allow our friendship to become cold; at least I know, and the Lord is my witness, that, notwithstanding distance, I should be ready to give every proof of love, to serve you in any respect, whether by words of comfort or otherwise. That I may be able to do this is a favor which I implore God to bestow upon me. I have no longings for court-life again. My most ardent wish is to know that you devote yourself to the study of the Scriptures, which can alone preserve you in communion with God and console you under the temptations of this world. For me there is no other comfort or enjoyment. Since the time that I was delivered from the depths of Italian

idolatry by the paternal guidance of Providence, and accompanied my husband to Germany, my soul has undergone a change which will appear incredible to you. Formerly, the reading of the Word of God filled me with aversion; now it is my joy and almost continual occupation. Riches, honor, and pleasure, on which I formerly placed so much value, I do not now regard as worthy of thought. O, dear Princess, that I could only direct your attention to this object! Nothing on earth is durable. Every thing fails, every thing passes away, and we are called, as the poet says,

‘To tread the path of death.’

This decisive moment is not far distant; time is transient, and neither riches nor power nor the favor of kings can save us; faith in Jesus Christ alone can preserve us from condemnation and eternal death. This faith is a gift of God, which we must seek from him by prayer. For of what assistance will it be to

us to know the history of Christ, if we do not possess a faith made active through love, which alone gives us strength to confess Christ in the midst of his enemies, remembering the Divine words, 'Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven?'

"The martyrs were witnesses of the faith, and the Church would not number any of them in its ranks if they had concealed their faith from the world. And you, dear Princess, to whom the Lord has vouchsafed the grace of manifesting his truth, can you doubt the innocence of men who are daily condemned to be burned, and who suffer such tortures for the sake of the Gospel of Christ? It is your duty to intercede for them, to mediate with the king for them, and pray for their pardon. If you remain quiet, if you allow them to suffer and die undefended, you make yourself accessory to their persecution.

"I know well that your defense of these

unfortunate people will invoke upon you the ill-favor of the king, the displeasure of your husband, and the hatred of your opponents; but I know also that it is better to prefer the enmity of men to the anger of God, who can not only kill the body, but condemn the soul to everlasting fire. 'If God is for us, who can be against us?' This great thought should always be present in your mind. O, how happy I should be to know that the desire for true piety and the favor of God alone filled your heart!

"Remember that you yourself are mortal, and I beg you to close your ear to those who say to you, 'Life is short; let us, therefore, follow the desire of our hearts and enjoy the pleasures of the world!' O, rather listen to the words of St. Paul: 'For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, . . . for to be carnally-minded is death, . . . for if ye live after the flesh ye shall die.' If my letter were pleasant to

you, I would write more circumstantially on this subject. I would also supply you with Christian books, if you wish to become instructed in the school of Christ. Profound emotion compels me to say this to you. I wish you to participate in the eternal blessings of God's kingdom, to whose glory he has called me."

In all probability this letter remained unanswered ; at least, nothing is known concerning a reply. This silence, as well as the contents of the letter, throw considerable light on the opinions and the relations of Anna. She may have been of service to some few of the persecuted ones, but generally she effected very little for the welfare of the Protestants. Renata had some hope that she herself would be able to afford assistance to her fellow-believers ; she indulged the hope, at least, of being allowed to live undisturbed in the enjoyment of her religious convictions. She arrived in France just as the contest between

the Guises and the Bourbons broke into a flame. Prince Condé was in prison, and condemned to death. Renata showed on this occasion that she intended to profess her faith openly, and without fear of men. She did not hesitate to express without reserve her deep displeasure at what had taken place. "Had I been in France," she said to her son-in-law, "such things would not have occurred. But care had better be taken for the future. The wound will not bleed long, for no one outrages the royal blood of France unpunished."

After the death of King Francis II, on the 5th of December, 1560, Anton de Navarre became regent of France for a short time. The queen dowager, however, Catherine de Medicis, held, in reality, the reins of State. The power of the Guises was, in some measure, broken. Condé was set at liberty, and a new ray of hope for the Protestant Christians relieved a little the dark night of their

sorrows. A new life seemed to dawn in the societies, for they were once more able to breathe with a little freedom. New members united daily with the little group of believers. Renata not only proved in her own person that she was a true believer in the Gospel, but she also collected a small congregation around her, and, at her request, a Protestant pastor was sent to her from Geneva.

She was in constant communication with the most eminent professors. She went to Admiral Coligny for advice whenever she needed it. She was united in friendship and love with women of Protestant inclinations, such as Madame de Coligny, Madame de Roye, with the mother-in-law of Condé, and especially with Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre. She was hoping that the latter would favor the Gospel, as her mother, Marguerite de Valois, had done, and by their united efforts they would be enabled to advance the Protestant doctrines. Renata took

up her permanent residence at Montargis, a small town with a castle, in the neighborhood of Orleans. Here, as well as in other places where she resided temporarily, she had the Protestant service performed. She used every means to guide her servants in a moral and religious path; and, although she sought, by word and example, to win them to the Protestant faith, she exercised no compulsion. She was very liberal in the giving of alms, never losing sight of the proverb, "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

On the 16th of January, 1561, Calvin, who had watched her movements closely as possible, wrote to her: "Worthy lady,—How much reason I have to thank God for continuing to keep you in his fear and obedience! Since experience shows how much cause you have to proceed, I hope that you will take it kindly if, in anxious desire for the salvation of your soul, I endeavor to assist you; for I know

that you like to be instructed, and to be reminded of your duty, and that you receive with gladness what you consider as coming from God. It is not necessary for me to specify all the difficulties which can restrain or divert you from serving God, since you know them only too well."

He further besought her imploringly to continue to comfort and strengthen her fellow-Christians, as she had commenced; for this was a service which was well pleasing to the Lord. As a wanderer quickens his pace as night approaches, so it behooved Renata to remember that old age was near, and that she must work more industriously, in order to leave a good memory behind her, but still more to present a good testimony before God and the angels.

From this time until her death, Renata professed her Protestant opinions on every suitable occasion. She was present at the Religious Conference, at Poissy, in 1561,

where the Reformers, under the lead of Theodore Beza, with heroic courage drew up and defended their Confession of Faith. She was not in a position, however, to procure freedom of faith and worship, nor could she prevent the soil of France, for almost thirty years, from being drenched with the blood of its children by a religious internecine war, causing unutterable misery.

But, while they took little heed of her prayers and warnings, she never allowed herself to be induced, by the entreaties and threats of her Catholic relations and others, to deny her faith. She withdrew more and more from them, in order to worship God undisturbed, according to her convictions. She positively refused to accede to the demand to remove her Protestant preacher from her presence, and still more decidedly to the requirement that she should become a Catholic.

She was threatened with confinement in a cloister, if she did not yield; but she

remained immovable. Perhaps she thought that the threat would not be carried into execution. She could, in such a case, rely upon her daughter, with whom she was always on good terms. She was allowed, although not willingly, to have a Protestant pastor in her immediate neighborhood; but Calvin and Beza were positively forbidden visiting her. The sorrows of her companions in faith gave her indescribable sadness.

Her son-in-law, Francis de Guise, was seized on a journey to Paris, where he was going for the purpose of breaking the influence of the Bourbons, which was already on the decline. Accompanied by an escort of two hundred cavalry, he arrived in the neighborhood of the small town of Vassy just as the bells were sounding for Protestant service. On hearing them, he exclaimed, "By the devil, I will alter this!" On the following day, he entered the town, with twenty horsemen and bowmen, and commanded the

chief magistrate and the leading ecclesiastic to appear before him, both of whom were decided enemies of the Reformers. The latter, in the mean time, had assembled in a barn for the worship of God. Suddenly some soldiers of the duke appeared at the door and demanded admittance. They were refused admission; and, when they attempted to gain an entrance by force, there was a hand-to-hand contest. The Duke of Guise soon approached, and, in the struggle, was wounded by a stone. From that time the soldiers knew no forbearance. Nearly sixty persons were killed, and many others wounded. What must have been Renata's feelings during this butchery? Yet she was compelled to endure and remain silent.

Soon after this occurrence, Calvin wrote to her that, since she had a person in her house who was fitted to exhort and strengthen her, it was not necessary for him to do it so often. He complained bitterly of the conduct of the daughter of Renata, who had drawn upon her-

self the universal displeasure of the Protestants, because she did not hinder her husband from his bloody persecutions of them. "I say this to you candidly," he continued, "in order that you may wisely consider what means can be used to prevent your daughter Anna from co-operating with those who intend to annihilate the true religion."

In those evil and troublous times, Renata could do nothing but open the doors of Montargis to the persecuted Huguenots, and afford assistance and safety to those who came to her. Even Calvin, that strict and undaunted judge of the frailties of great and small, could not refrain from expressing to the duchess his acknowledgment of her firmness of faith and her active love toward her persecuted fellow-Christians. He said, in a letter to her: "I know, worthy lady, how much God has strengthened you during the violent storm, and that you have firmly withstood all temptations, and have not been afraid of bearing

the cross of Christ. More than this, I know you have received as a mother the poor exiles who have come to you. I know many princes would have taken it as an offense if one had called their castle a 'hospital of God;' but I know no way of showing you greater respect than by using the term, and, in this manner, of acknowledging the human kindness with which you have received the children of God." In conclusion, Calvin interceded for the daughter of a former Professor of the Greek Language at Ferrara, who now lived in banishment at Geneva, and whose income was so small that he was not able to live without the assistance of his friends. Renata promised to aid, as far as possible, the professor's daughter.

The little community at Montargis exhibited a healthy Christian life, even under the most untoward circumstances. Ecclesiastical discipline was strictly observed, and the pastor, Francis Morel, took watchful care that no one interfered to hinder the good work. Even the

duchess, who was the stay of the whole community, was obliged to carry out all of his wishes. Morel thought, however, that he had sufficient reasons for complaint. Calvin, therefore, wrote to her: "Since God has led you back, worthy lady, to your city [Renata had been in Paris a short time before], it behooves you to double your care for the regulation of your subjects, and even of your own household. I therefore pray you to be firm in maintaining a good police for the suppression of vice and scandal. I do not mean any secular police arrangement, but the official punishment of the consistory. . . . Especially must no one, no matter who he may be, in what position he may stand, or how much respected he may be, be ashamed to submit to the arrangement which the Son of God himself has instituted; for I assure you that, without this means, coarseness, looseness, and terrible confusion would be the result. . . . Never allow yourself to be betrayed, as the

Lord has commanded you, into altering any condition of the Church; for before it each nobleman must bow. Do not allow yourself to be persuaded that your house should be specially privileged. Bear in mind that no one can offer you a greater insult than to attempt to separate you from the body of the Church."

Calvin sent the duchess, with this letter, a gold coin, which her father had had made at the time of his war with Rome, and which bore the inscription, "I will annihilate the name of Babylon."

Renata promised, in her answer, to follow the counsel which had been given, although other women, as the Queen of Navarre and Madame de Coligny, had a voice in the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline over their households. She was much pleased with the present which Calvin made her. She had known nothing of this motto of her father, and hoped that what he had not

been able to complete, his posterity would be able to do.

Peace and quiet during the remainder of Renata's life seemed forbidden. If one unpleasant event was, in some measure, suppressed, another took its place which afflicted her heart no less severely. Such an occurrence was the murder of her son-in-law, who had made himself hated more than ever by the massacre at Vassy. A Calvinistic fanatic, named Poltrot, fancied that he would do God a service by removing this bitter enemy of the Gospel; so he murdered him at Orleans, in the year 1563. The Catholics found ready fuel in this act of violence for the flame of persecution.

Although most of the Reformed preachers were unprejudiced and impartial, they exulted with their congregations over the death of their most dangerous enemy, and did not seem to think that the manner in which it had been done could injure their good cause.

Anna, the wife of the murdered man, was prostrated with grief, and on every occasion expressed her sorrow. The more this was known the more bitter were the Reformers against her. Renata was divided in her feelings. She saw the tears of her widowed daughter, heard her moans and complaints; sympathized with her in her bereavement; how could she join in the shout of joy over what had happened?

What she experienced we learn from her own words. She wrote to Calvin: "I will not excuse the failings of my son-in-law in not having a true knowledge of God, but only in the charge of his having alone kindled the fire. I know that he persecuted the Protestants; but I neither know nor believe that he was entirely reprobated by God, because he showed signs quite to the contrary before his death. Some people, I am well aware, wish that this should not be said, and the mouths of those are closed who know

it; and do you not see that, even after his death, hatred is not satisfied?"

Calvin answered this letter, and begged the duchess to moderate her complaints, for every one said that she was entirely too demonstrative. David had taught us by his example to hold the enemies of God in derision. Renata should remember what the Church of the Lord had been compelled to suffer for years, and that these troubles were produced chiefly by the Duke of Guise, who, for that reason, could find no indulgence. The Protestants had often prayed to God to be delivered from their bitterest enemy. We must not, therefore, condemn without measure that which had served God as an instrument. If the death of this man be the cause of so much sensation, we must not forget the hundred thousand who had fallen for the sake of their faith.

Calvin, on his death-bed, dictated another letter to the duchess. It read as follows:

"Worthy lady,—I pray you to forgive me if

I write to you by the hand of another, since I myself am prevented from doing so on account of my great weakness. Now, worthy lady, if my counsel is still of weight with you, I pray you, do not give yourself up too much to the excitement of your mind; for too violent passions produce many unpleasant things. I am not a little surprised that you have entirely misunderstood me, as if I, in speaking of the condemned, had not expressly excluded the person of the Duke of Guise, and maintained that those were too bold who condemned individuals according to their own standard. I shall, therefore, forbear to say any thing more to you on this subject, either good or evil. I will only refer to one point. It was very easy for all well-disposed persons to reject you, simply because you are the mother-in-law of the Duke of Guise; but you are now all the more honored and beloved, because you have not been led away from the knowledge of the true faith by this circum-

stance. I also give you the assurance that this has caused me to wonder at your virtues."

Renata could scarcely overcome her grief at the death of her son-in-law; yet she was not led astray in her Protestant sentiments. The above was the last letter which she received from her spiritual father. On the 24th of May, 1564, Calvin was called from this life of turmoil to his heavenly rest. But many disturbed days were yet in store for the Duchess Renata. The religious civil war in France raged with almost uninterrupted fury. Many battles were fought, and, especially those which occurred near St. Dreux, Jarnace, and Montcontour, proved unfavorable to the Reformers. Prince de Condé was shot, without ceremony, against all usages of warfare. Anton de Navarre, who had previously apostatized to the Catholics, lost his life at the siege of Rouen. Peace was declared several times; as, for instance, at Orleans, or Amboise, in 1563, at Longjumeau in 1566, and at St. Germain-on-

Laye in 1570. But the most of these treaties of peace were broken almost before they were ratified. The one was called the "halting, or little," so that one could see by the epithet what little value it had.

The Reformers had their chief power in the towns, where they defended themselves with extraordinary determination. In the beginning of the war they possessed exemplary order and discipline. As they resorted to arms for the sake of conscience, they also wished to distinguish themselves by purity of morals. No disorderly persons, no cards or dice, were suffered among them. No one dared utter a blasphemous or an unchaste word; plundering and robbery were strictly prohibited. Noblemen paid for what they took for themselves and those dependent on them. Whoever committed deeds of violence was punished most severely. Morning and evening, public prayer was held; the king and the royal family were not forgotten in them.

Unfortunately, this exemplary conduct did not last long. The remembrance of wrongs suffered, daily familiarity with cruelty, connected with deeply-rooted religious bitterness, caused even the Huguenots, though they had conducted themselves on strictly religious principles, to fall into excesses. When money failed, they seized the sacred vessels in the Catholic churches, and they did this with all the less hesitation because they considered them as means for the promotion of idolatry. But however much wrong the Reformers may have done, we almost lose sight of it when we compare it with what was done on the side of their opponents. All moral sense appears to have disappeared during this unholy war. All oaths and contracts were entirely forgotten or unheeded. The conditional surrender of towns or submission of soldiers only served to make more sure their death. There was scarcely a town between the Vosges and Pyrenees which had

not been the scene of the most revolting cruelties. Fathers and mothers were murdered before the eyes of their children, and children were drowned, strangled, or otherwise murdered in the presence of their parents.

About the year 1570, both parties were exhausted, and were at least partially weary of the war. Peace was therefore concluded at Germain-on-Laye. The Reformers were guaranteed freedom of worship in all those places which were in their possession; pardon for all the past was also assured them, as well as the right to participate in public offices and beneficent institutions, and the permission to reside in any place in the kingdom.

We must take into consideration all these circumstances if we wish to judge aright the behavior of Renata at this time. We can imagine that she had little desire to leave Montargis while this civil war was raging throughout France. Here she lived, as far as it was then possible, undisturbed and at

peace. Wherever she could, she interfered in favor of the Huguenots, either being invited by them, or doing so of her own accord. She was in correspondence with Protestant ministers, and especially with the leaders of parties—with Admiral Coligny, Condé, and others. Her correspondence was very extensive. For example, she wrote a special letter to a forest steward, who had to procure the wood that was used during her residence in the castle. In the mean time foreign princes addressed themselves to her, that they might better be able to promote their designs in France; as the Duke of Prussia did, when, in the year 1565, he sent an embassy to the French king.

In her neighborhood, religious affairs came finally to an open contest between the Catholics and Protestants. Peace, however, was again soon restored by Renata's intervention, and the adherents of the different confessions, as even Catholic writers admit, lived at Mont-

argis peaceably together. Renata advanced this peace by giving help to the poor and suffering, without reference to difference of faith. She was greatly alarmed at one time by a body of four hundred Catholic soldiers entering her castle. They were under the command of Captain Malicorne, who was taking the town by force, and threatened to bombard the castle if she did not give up the Huguenots who were in it. Renata, at this time of danger, displayed her royal mind and her fidelity to Protestantism. She declared that only the King of France had power to command her, and if Captain Malicorne should use force she would expose herself, and see if he would dare kill a king's daughter.

These words had their effect, and from this time forth the Huguenots found peace under the protection of Renata. She traveled but little at this time; her last journey of any consequence was with King Charles IX, when he made his tour through France. She appears

to have had the intention to strengthen by her presence the Protestant Christians, to listen to their complaints, and, if possible, procure protection and assistance from the king. On this journey she experienced, at Toulouse, the outbreak of religious hate ; for a mob of that city insulted and threw stones at her and her curate.

In the third religious war, which took place between 1568 and 1570, armed men again came to Montargis, and demanded of Renata that she should send away the Huguenots to whom she had afforded an asylum. This time she was obliged to yield to force, and to give up the unfortunate ones. They left their noble-hearted benefactress with tears streaming from their eyes. As they went forth, they were in danger of being robbed and murdered by enraged Catholic soldiery. Providentially, there came up at the right moment a patrol of Protestant soldiers, who saved them. Renata saw with her own eyes the cruelties of

St. Bartholemew's night, August 24, 1572; for she was among the number of those whom the marriage ceremony of the daughter of the king had drawn to Paris. She was in imminent danger of falling a victim to the massacre; but her steadfastness remained unshaken. Through her instrumentality, several Protestants were saved from death. Among them were Pastor Merlin and his son, and the daughter of the Chancellor L'Hopital. She conducted the latter, with an escort, which her grandson, the Duke of Guise, had procured for her, to Montargis, and provided for her further welfare.

Her temporal circumstances were, to the last, such as enabled her to live in a manner agreeable to her station, and still to have something left with which to relieve the needy. She complained, however, that her revenues were withheld from her, and her privileges restricted. Several legal documents, which have reference to her affairs,

prove that these complaints were not without foundation.

The 12th of June, 1575, was the day of Renata's happy release. Although she did not die by the executioner's sword, she nevertheless bore the martyr's crown. According to her wish, she was interred in the castle church, without any pomp or display, as no amount of ostentation now could comfort the living or be of service to the dead. But the men of the royal family could not forbear paying some honor to the memory of the departed one; they, therefore, had a funeral service for her commemoration in the Bourbon chapel.

In her will she expressed her deepest regret for the civil war, and for the horrid devastations which it had produced. She also repeated in it her acknowledgement of the Gospel, and commended it to her children. She regarded it as the foundation of domestic happiness and national prosperity. The town of

Montargis had much reason to be grateful to its noble inhabitant. She left money for the purpose of having benevolent institutions erected and general improvements made in the town; so that Montargis soon became much changed, and for many years the inhabitants continued to show marked respect and esteem for the name of Renata.





VII.

RENATA'S CHILDREN—THEIR RELATION TO THE POET TASSO.

O the people of Germany, the children of Renata, and especially Leonore, are known better than Renata herself.

Who among us has not read the drama of "Torquato Tasso," by Goethe? We will, therefore, make a brief mention of these children.

The Government of Ferrara devolved upon Alphonso II, the eldest son of Renata, whose system of management gave occasion to much censure. Travelers who visited the city at that time were much surprised to see the broad streets and the beautifully built and magnificently adorned palaces; but there was

no real life among the inhabitants. The streets were empty, and business nearly suspended. Almost intolerable taxes oppressed the people. A tenth part of each contract, even if it were only a loan, each sale and purchase—indeed, every thing that brought money—flowed into the coffers of the duke. A similar quota had to be paid upon every thing which was brought into the city. Not only was the sale of salt considered and carried on as a ducal monopoly, but also the sale of bread, flour, and other necessities of life; and the maintenance of this law was enforced with such strictness that one neighbor hardly ever dared lend any thing of the kind to another. Even noblemen were extremely limited in the exercise of the chase; and the severity with which every transgression of this kind was punished is proved by the fact that, on one day, six of these gentlemen were hanged in the market-place, with dead pheasants at their feet.

Alphonso lived in almost continual hostility and strife with the Duke of Tuscany. Nor was he on the best terms with his liege lord, the Pope. He sought protection against his enemies in Italy by an alliance with the Emperor of Germany. He went to Germany several times, with a splendid cortege; and, in the year 1566, he rendered valuable assistance to the emperor against the Turks. He also made Ferrara one of the strongest fortifications in Italy. In his wrath, he spared neither high nor low. A gentleman named Gonzaga had been murdered; and every one accused a young nobleman by the name of Ercole Contrario of having instigated the crime, for the reason that the perpetrator found hospitable reception in his house. The duke demanded the surrender of the criminal, and young Contrario dared not disobey. Fearful of being betrayed by the murderer, he had him murdered, and delivered up his corpse. Alphonso did not for a moment con-

sider that the family of Contrario belonged to one of the most wealthy and powerful houses of the land, and that Ercole was its very last scion. He gave orders for the latter to come to his court. Scarcely, however, had Ercole entered the ducal palace before he was again borne out, a corpse. The duke maintained that he was suddenly seized with apoplexy, in the course of their conversation, and fell down dead. Traces of violence were, notwithstanding, perceived on the body.

No one, especially among the courtiers, dared to contradict Alphonso. The most trifling matter would often result in the loss of favor with the duke. One of the most celebrated preachers of his time, Panigarola, whom the duke had brought to Ferrara at great expense, was banished, without hesitation, because he had entered into some negotiations with another prince. Fondness for the arts and sciences, which for a long time had been a characteristic of the members

of the house of Este, was not wanting in Alphonso. He made great exertions, in order to prove himself a patron and protector of celebrated men, and to be famed and flattered by them in their writings. His younger brother, Luigi, who had become a cardinal at an early age, and had received many ecclesiastical prebends, among which was the bishopric of Auch, in France, imitated his elder brother in these nobler endeavors; but he was, also, not free from failings similar to those of Alphonso.

The two sisters, Lucretia and Leonore, were devotedly attached to one another and to their brother. They constituted, by the purity of their morals and whole life, a striking contrast to the dissolute life of the other courtiers. Otherwise, they were very different from each other. Lucretia manifested more thought and reflection; Leonore more emotion. The former was more a woman of the world than her sister, and more susceptible to the homage

and flattery which were bestowed upon her by her admirers. Leonore, on the contrary, had so little taste for the joys of the world that she did not wish to make her appearance even at the marriage festivities of her brother. She lived in retirement, studying first the old poets and then the new. However much, in other respects, she had inherited her mother's traits of character, she ever remained quite free from her Protestant opinions. The Catholic religion, with its imposing ceremonial, was particularly agreeable to her mind; and she, as well as all her sisters and brothers, had been educated with all care in this respect. Among the courtiers, she was almost worshiped as a saint. The saving of the city from a dangerous inundation was ascribed to her prayers.

Torquato Tasso, the poet, who was then only twenty-one years of age, came to the court of Ferrara in October, 1561. He had already gained some celebrity by his heroic

poem, "Rinaldo." Cardinal Luigi had received him as a courtier. He was already engaged upon his famous epic, "Jerusalem Delivered." Soon after his arrival in Ferrara, the poet, as might be expected, became intimately acquainted with the two princesses. Both of them were of an age when, especially in Italy, feminine attractions had passed the time of bloom. Lucretia had reached her thirty-second year, and Leonore her thirtieth. Alphonso manifested great friendship and condescension toward Tasso; because he hoped that he would contribute greatly toward increasing the splendor of Ferrara and the fame of the house of Este.

The more Tasso ascended in the favor of the illustrious brothers and sisters, the more busy was envy to estrange the hearts of others from him. Tasso may, in some measure, have caused an unfavorable opinion of himself by his somewhat arrogant nature. Ariosto, the poet of "Orlando Furioso," was residing in

Ferrara, where he had for a long time lived in high esteem. The young poet did not conceal his desire of surpassing his predecessor; and all his expressions betrayed the consciousness that he was certain of a favorable result. Perhaps, also, the gay courtiers and other people of the world, of whom there were not a few in Ferrara, found no special pleasure in the moral earnestness which appeared in the writings and the whole conduct of Tasso; so that the number of those who were more inimical than friendly to Tasso was not small.

Giovanni Battista Pigna, secretary and historian of the house of Este, lived at the court of the duke. He was much beloved, and possessed great influence. This man was, therefore, jealous of Tasso, since the latter, as a star of the first magnitude, threw his inferior political fame, of which he was somewhat vain, far into the shade. His jealousy was still greater when he saw that Tasso was not indifferent to a young lady, Lucretia Bendidio,

to whom he gave his homage. Even the Princess Leonore suggested to Tasso that it would be prudent in him to try and pacify his opponent by some friendly words, and thereby diminish, if possible, the unpleasant feeling which was existing between them. Tasso followed her advice. In the year 1570, the elder of the princesses, Lucretia, was married to the son of the Duke of Urbino. Tasso made known his sympathy with the joyful event by a special wedding poem. While he mourned her departure, we can not say that a specially sensible void had been produced in his life.

In the following year, the Cardinal Luigi made a journey to France, where, on account of his position as Archbishop of Auch, he had much business to attend to. Tasso, as his courtier, was obliged to follow him. The circumstances of Tasso could not have been very favorable, or he was a very bad manager. We read in the orders which he made before his journey, that he pawned some articles of

clothing with a Jew for twenty-five lires, and to another a carpet for thirteen scudi. He made the necessary disposition in regard to his poem, as well as his possessions, in case he should die before his return. It is of particular interest to us to learn that he remarked to the friends whom he appointed as his executors, that if any difficulties should be placed in the way of the carrying out of his orders, they might appeal to the Princess Leonore, who, he knew, would not, out of love for him, refuse to render any assistance necessary.

At Paris, the connection between the poet and his master, Cardinal Luigi, was dissolved, for some unknown reason ; but not long afterward we find Tasso again in the service of Duke Alphonso. His enemies had not yet succeeded in entirely withdrawing from him the favor of the duke. The sisters may have had some influence in bringing about his return, and procuring him a friendly reception.

He could now proceed with his epic with fresh courage and inspiration. He made some progress, although not to the extent and with the rapidity which the duke wished and hoped. The poet went deliberately to work, and would not allow himself to be often interrupted with other poetical work. On the death of Alphonso's first wife, he was obliged to fulfill his duty as court poet. He also finished, about this time, a pastoral drama, entitled, "*Amyntas*." He did not wish to publish this work for several reasons, and had it represented only in Ferrara.

Lucretia wished to become acquainted with this new proof of her friend's poetical genius. Tasso, therefore, with the permission of the duke, was compelled to comply with the invitation, and repair with his manuscript to Pesaro. The poet remained for several months with his former patroness, and was affectionately welcomed by the entire ducal court. As the duchess was obliged to accompany her

husband to an estate where he could enjoy himself in hunting and fishing, she entreated Tasso to go with them as a companion. In the Autumn he returned to Ferrara, taking with him many expensive presents which he had received.

In the following Spring, the "Jerusalem Delivered" progressed so far that a poet less exact and critical would have published it without further labor; but Tasso wished first to hear the judgment of an experienced friend, and therefore sent his work to his patron, Scipio Gonzaga, at Rome, in order that he might read it through with the eye of a critic, and allow other persons of education and taste to do the same. The opinions of these critics were very different, so that Tasso continually became more uneasy and hesitating. His mind seemed much affected by their decisions; and from this time forth he lost all confidence in himself, and became distrustful of others. He had written several letters to his friends in

Rome, and because they were not promptly received, he entertained the suspicion that they had been intercepted on the way, for the purpose of being used to his disadvantage.

Duke Alphonso noticed, to his great grief, the altered tone of the poet's mind, and exerted himself in order to dissipate his mistrust and make him cheerful again. He invited him to read the poem in his presence, and conversed as much as possible with him. He also allowed him to accompany him to his villa of Belriguardo.

All this attention, however, seemed to cheer him but for a short time; even the return home of the Princess Lucretia produced no essential improvement. She made repeated efforts to dissipate his sadness, but his grief could not be appeased permanently. He longed to go to Rome, that he might have an understanding with his critics. The duke gave his consent unwillingly to this journey. But Tasso was not to be moved from his inten-

tion; he could not feel comfortable in his existing situation, since he thought that he was surrounded by enemies. His greatest desire was to be placed in other relations, and the most agreeable to him would have been a free and independent position in Rome.

Alphonso looked forward with impatience to the finishing and publication of the much-discussed epic, and feared that if Tasso were allowed to leave before that took place, he would omit all those places which had reference to the house of Este, and thus rob him of his anticipated fame. He reluctantly gave the desired permission; but from that hour there remained an incurable wound in his relations to the poet. Unfortunately, Tasso's residence in Rome did not improve his state of mind. Oral explanations produced no better understanding between him and his critics. To add to the embarrassment of the poet, he was undecided as to whether he should return to Ferrara or not. His conscience dictated

that he ought not to leave the ducal court before the publication of his epic. He also felt linked to Ferrara by invisible bonds, or he would have chosen Florence for a residence, where he had received assurances that he would have a friendly reception.

Tasso, moreover, was troubled with religious doubts and scruples. He returned again to Ferrara, and was received in the most friendly manner by his former patrons and patronesses. About this time a young lady, Leonore Sanvitale, the wife of Count Scandiano, created much excitement in the city on account of her amiability and intellectual talents. Tasso also was captivated by her lovely appearance, and, of all the admirers of this lady, he was fortunate in receiving the most attention. In this, as might be expected, he aroused the envy and antagonism of the other admirers, but his imagination greatly increased the number. He fancied that, on all sides, there were intentions and designs to injure him.

On setting out on a journey to Modena, he delivered all the keys of his apartments to a court attendant, with the exception of that belonging to the one in which he kept his books and private papers. On his return, he instantly saw that this room had been opened. His melancholy now became more profound and perceptible. The Princess Leonore took an affectionate interest in the unfortunate poet, and begged him to accompany her to the beautiful villa of Consandoli, eighteen miles from Ferrara. This residence had a good influence on the poet, so that he returned to Ferrara invigorated in spirit. An aggravating event occurred about this time which greatly increased his depression of spirits. It was said that he had intrusted his secrets to a man whose faithfulness then appeared beyond suspicion. This individual, however, betrayed his confidence, and so excited his anger that he called him to the ducal palace to give an account of himself.

Tasso so far forgot himself as to attack this friend, and give him a blow. The latter did not venture, however, to challenge the poet on the spot, but afterward offered to fight a duel with him.

When Tasso had repaired to the appointed place, and the duel had commenced, three brothers of his opponent appeared and attacked him. According to another account, it did not come to a challenge at all; but the false friend, some days after he had been attacked, came, with his brothers, and grasped the poet; but the latter defended himself so bravely that the assassins were obliged to flee.

This incident remained without further consequence. The duke did not appear to be particularly angry; at least the report that he was the cause of Tasso's imprisonment is not corroborated by history. On the contrary, he at that time gave the poet especial proof of his good-will, from which it is evident that

the ducal family had not been unpleasantly concerned in the discovered secret.

It was very painful for the poet to learn that his epic had been printed, in several Italian cities, without his knowledge. He thought that it required much improvement before being presented to the public, and saw himself, besides, robbed of considerable pecuniary compensation. His depression of mind increased from day to day, and he could not banish the fear of being poisoned or murdered. All friendly admonition of the duke and his sisters failed of effect. One day he went into the apartment of the Duchess of Urbino, and attacked, with a drawn dagger, one of her servants, whom he suspected of preparing snares for him. The duke had the poet imprisoned, to prevent further mischief; but, after a few days, he again set him at liberty, Tasso promising that he would allow himself to be thoroughly treated by a physician. The duke evidently took much interest in

the unhappy man. He also influenced him to appear before the Inquisition, in order to put his mind at rest with respect to his orthodoxy.

Tasso was not willing to keep his promise, and undergo a thorough medical treatment, for fear that poison would be administered with his medicine, and that he would be forbidden the use of wine, which he loved so much. He wrote to the duke in such a manner that the latter felt himself insulted, and forbade the poet to write again to himself or his sisters. Tasso then gave up to despair, and in this state of mind fled to his sister in Sorrento, without money, without his clothing, and without his manuscripts.

After a while, he reproached himself most bitterly for leaving his former patrons and friends in so imprudent a manner. He wrote to the duke and to his sisters, but only received an answer from Leonore, and such a one as to inspire him with but little hope. Notwithstanding this, he resolved to return

to Ferrara, and to approach the ducal family with confidence. Alphonso granted his plea for a reconciliation, although on the repeated condition that Tasso should submit to thorough medical treatment.

After a short time, the old disposition returned, and, indeed, with all the more force, since his manuscripts were refused him. The duke feared that if he delivered them up the poet would immediately leave the city. His suspicions were correct; for, not long afterward, Tasso escaped secretly, like a fugitive, without even his manuscripts. He repaired, after fruitless wanderings, to the court of the Duke of Savoy, at Turin; but nowhere could he find the desired rest. A secret magnet drew him back to Ferrara. His arrival there occurred just when every body was busy with the festivities incident to the reception of the second wife of the duke. No one in the whole court troubled himself about the unbidden guest. Indeed, after the festivities were

over, he did not receive that attention he had expected. He was filled with indignation, and did not know how to control himself, so that he uttered many invectives against the duke and the ducal family, and revoked the eulogies on them which he had distributed through his poem. The consequence was that the duke had him placed in the Hospital of St. Anne, in which persons were kept who were of insane mind.

Here he was confined for several years, and, indeed, during the early part of the period, in the closest manner. The principal of the hospital, Augustino Mosti, indulged a personal prejudice against Tasso, and withheld from him even such comforts as he might otherwise have afforded him without hesitation.

Some time afterward, the poet was again allowed to use ink and paper, according to his wish. He wrote affecting letters to the duke, wherein he begged most urgently to be

restored to liberty; but an answer was never vouchsafed to him. Some poems, also, which he sent to the princesses, were without success. The intercession of other princes to whom Tasso appealed were of as little effect toward his release. The same answer was always given, "That he was only detained for the cure of his mental derangement, and would be set at liberty as soon as that occurred." The letters and poems which he wrote at this time manifest that this alleged derangement had no real existence.

In the year 1580, Tasso received a better room, in which he could move about more freely, and could employ himself with literature. Later, he obtained permission to go out and visit some friends in the city; yet he remained virtually a prisoner, and it is not to be wondered at that his health became much impaired, and that his melancholy increased. On the 6th of July, 1586, the unhappy poet again received the liberty of

which he had so long been deprived. The Duke of Modena, whose sister Alphonso had married, had given his brother-in-law the promise that no one should have any thing to fear from him. Tasso traveled from Ferrara in company with his liberator, without, as he wished, having had a farewell audience of the ducal family.

We can not follow the poet on his long wanderings. We can only say that he remained in no place long, as he could not find the rest he sought. Death overtook him on the 25th of April, 1595, at Rome, where he was soon to have received the honor of being crowned with laurel.

It only remains for us now to answer the question, because it so nearly concerns the family of Este, What was the reason of the long imprisonment of the poet, and in what relation did he stand to his princely patrons, especially to the two sisters, Lucretia and Leonore? The opinion is almost

universal that Tasso ardently loved Leonore, and that this attachment was the cause of the anger of the duke and the harshness resulting from it. Goethe has followed this view in his drama, and, we think, for reasons that are not to be underrated.

The first biographer of the poet, Manso, a contemporary and acquaintance of Tasso, hints at this relationship. Shortly afterward, we find in several poems allusions to this circumstance. In an allegorical comedy, which appeared five years after the above-mentioned biography, the poet is presented to the muse Calliope, and reference is made to Tasso's ardent affection for Leonore. In a novel which was published in Venice, in the year 1662, it is remarked that the emperor himself had solicited the hand of the Princess Leonore, and that she gave a refusal, because Tasso had expressed his despair in a poem concerning her removal. This was the secret which Tasso intrusted to his false friend, and

the discovery of which occasioned so much strife.

An Italian historian of the last century, Muratori, who occupied himself specially with the history of the family of Este, relates that, when a youth, he had heard from the Abbot *Franzesko Caraffa*, of Modena, the following: "One day when Tasso was in company with the duke and the two sisters, and had approached Leonore, in order to answer a question, he manifested more than ordinary affection for her. The duke quietly and discreetly turned to the persons present and said: 'See what a great misfortune! So great a man has become deranged!' In order to withdraw him from worse treatment, he had him placed in the hospital of St. Anne."

While we dare not ignore this statement altogether, there are, nevertheless, many things which contradict it. How is it to be explained that such a report did not get abroad earlier? How can we believe that the many enemies

of the poet did not hear of this fact; and, if they did hear it, how could they remain silent?

We doubt, therefore, after calm consideration and examination, much that was said and written. Still we do not agree with those who deny the existence of any attachment between the poet and the princess. Leonore was certainly ten years older than Tasso, and was in her thirtieth year when she became acquainted with him, and in her forty-second year when Tasso was placed in the hospital.

This poet, with all his humility and modesty, possessed so much self-consciousness and poetical pride that he could not consider it presumption to make a princess the object of his affections. It is true that he must have been drawn to Ferrara by some powerful attraction. Otherwise, he would hardly have despised the well-intended and well-grounded advice of discreet friends, and continually returned to this city.

His poems prove unmistakably that he had chosen Leonore as the object of his love, and some passages point undeniably to the princess. In conclusion, we must not forget that on his journey to Paris he expressed to his friend that Leonore would, out of love for him, give her aid in carrying out his last will and testament. We do not believe, however, that any formal and mutual declaration of attachment had taken place. His enemies certainly would not have allowed this opportunity of injuring him to pass by unimproved, if they had had the slightest suspicion of such a relation.

The conduct of the poet toward the duke, when he returned from Turin to Ferrara, is given as the reason of his imprisonment. Tasso alleges, as the cause of much of his unhappiness, the insulting expressions which he had used against the duke; and, in his letters out of prison, he begs Alphonso to pardon all his misgivings in this respect. In

several of his poems, he complains of his anger, which had urged him on to ruin.

If we enumerate the many cruelties which the duke permitted to be exercised toward high and low during his reign, we will consider the severity with which he treated Tasso as a procedure quite in harmony with his character.

Leonore died before Tasso gained his freedom. Her death occurred on the 10th of February, 1581, apparently of consumption. No poem on her death, from Tasso's pen, is known to have been written. The princess spent the evening of her life in great retirement, and won for herself, by reason of her piety, a kind of saintliness. Her whole life and endeavors were directed to things high and heavenly.

Lucretia survived her sister, and was a woman of great spirit until her death. When her brother Alphonso died, in 1594, without an heir, she placed hinderances, as far as she

could, in the way of the succession of her step-uncle, Cæsar of Este, and supported the efforts of the Pope to make Ferrara a Papal fief. Cæsar was obliged to be satisfied with Modena.

Anna, the eldest daughter of Renata, after the murder of her first husband, married his brother Jacob, Duke of Aumale. She was at enmity with the Huguenots; for she considered them all as participants in the murder of her husband. She was particularly angry with Admiral Coligny, who was unjustly charged with having secretly incited the assassination. It is said that she occasioned the wounding of Coligny, but a short time before his assassination. In her private life, however, she was blameless, so that it could be said that she had carefully guarded her moral conduct as the best inheritance from her mother and grandmother.

In the contest of the city of Paris against Henry IV, she proved herself the opponent

of the latter; for she urged the citizens to resistance, and supported them, as far as she could. She lived until 1607, greatly esteemed and almost adored by her friends.

Unprejudiced readers may be in doubt as to whom to give the preference, to the mother or the daughters. What they possessed of goodness they owed to her, while their imperfections can, without much difficulty, be attributed to another source.

We think Renata had judged the state of things aright when, as a widow, she left Italy and sought the land of her childhood and youth. Would her son, whom we have not seen from the most advantageous side, have bestowed upon her as much respect and allowed her as much freedom as she enjoyed in France? Could she have quietly looked on while her own son, as ruler, entirely lost sight of all care for the well-being of his subjects? and would there have existed between her and her fanatically Catholic daughters

that unity which there should be between mother and daughter?

Ariosto, however, has interwoven into his epic the following in honor of Renata:

“For every virtue that hath woman graced,
Since fire hath warmed or water hath made wet,
Or the heavens have arched above us, I see
Adorn Renata, with her sister choir.”

Another Catholic writer says of the duchess: “She was adorned with all manner of accomplishments, and stands in history as a clear and shining light; but as, in paintings, light is rendered more conspicuous by shade, so the virtues of the duchess become more prominent by the shade of her heresy. That was the only fault which it has been possible to perceive in her.”

But we, as Protestants, consider this failing as a virtue. We have recorded some weaknesses in her character; but we must remember her circumstances and the times in which she lived. Let him who can boast that he

has done better under similar circumstances be the one to cast the first stone! We feel that we can safely say of Renata, "The memory of the just is blessed!"



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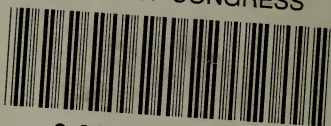


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